Rights group says
Army running amuck
ACROSS/A16

MILF suspends top leader Kabalu
for meeting with candidates
ACROSS/A16

Sumilao farmers finally
get land titles in Bukidnon
NEWS/A8

PHILIPPINE DAILY
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BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Controversial judge's
car bombed in Taytay
METRO/A23

China quake kills
400, buries more
WORLD/A26

"ROAD TRIP TO CHANGE" stops to "Rock the Vote." It features popular bands like Kamikazee and Sugarfree. The concert caravan sponsored by the Liberal Party will be staged in major urban centers in the country to solidify the youth vote for Noynoy Aquino. It starts on Saturday in Pampanga.

LP to tie yellow ribbon 'round RP in 17 days

By Jocelyn R. Uy

IN THE HOMESTRETCH OF the presidential election, frontrunner Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III will tie yellow ribbons around the country during a nonstop 17-day concert caravan aimed at binding the youth vote.

Dubbed the "Rock the Vote: Road Trip to Change," the caravan will trailblaze a virtual single-looped yellow ribbon, winding its way through 10 cities and towns in Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao and tying the first around, ironically, two bedsticks of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"The caravan will make a yellow ribbon around the Philippines so everyone who attends

LP P-8

Biz groups join clamor for parallel vote count

By Amy R. Remo and Kristine L. Alave

WHAT'S BAD FOR BUSINESS IS bad for the country.

Fearing a possible failure of the automated elections on May 10, influential business groups yesterday joined a growing clamor for the Commission on Elections (Comelec) to adopt a parallel backup manual count.

In a briefing, officials of the Makati Business Club (MBC) and the Management Association of the Philippines (MAP) said that the manual count should be done on a contingency measure for at least the contests for president, vice president and mayors.

This has been proposed by a group of IT professionals, as well as various poll watchdog organizations and political parties.

The MBC and MAP officials gave the Comelec until April 23 to accept what they called was a "hand-aid solution."

Should Comelec ignore the business groups' suggestions, MBC president Alberto Lim said: "This is not our last card. We have other cards to play." He did not give details.

Lim said the Comelec could allocate some P500 million for the backup plan, including provisions for laptops and projectors, as well as the costs that may be incurred should the precinct-count optical scan

BIZ GROUPS A11

Albay gov joins Noy, shocks GMA party

Salceda: I will make him win in Bicol

By TJ Burgonio, Christine O. Avendaño and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

STALWARTS OF THE RULING Lakas-Kampi-CMD are bewildered by the defection of Albay Gov. Joey Salceda to the camp of Sen. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III, and are appealing to President Macapagal-Arroyo to step in and stop the bleeding.

"I don't understand," Lakas-Kampi-CMD secretary general Raymundo Roquero said by phone early yesterday. "[Salceda] organized the Cracas for Governors. The very basis for their existence is *palabra de honor* (word of honor). If it's very hard to comprehend."

Be that as it may, Salceda, who's running unopposed for reelection, has indeed accepted Aquino's offer to be the LP regional chair in Bicol. But he has asked to be given "sufficient" time to "make proper notice to [the Lakas

ALBAY A-10

CLASSMATES It's official: Albay Gov. Joey Salceda is deserting to the Liberal Party and throwing his support behind Sen. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III, his former classmate and teammate in English class at Ateneo de Manila University. Aquino spent Wednesday reaching out to supporters in Cebu City.

Next president will inherit near-empty gov't coffers

By Dexter L. Lacuna

THE COUNTRY'S NEXT PRESIDENT will face the daunting task of running an economy with near-empty government coffers while pushing for crucial and unpopular reform programs, according to some of the country's leading economic minds.

More importantly, whoever the next president will be must carry these reform measures through Congress early in his term if he is to avoid having to contend with populist lawmakers, professors at the UP School of Economics said yesterday.

"The next president will inherit a system that is nearing fiscal collapse," economist Benjamin Diokno said at an Ayala Corp.-sponsored forum, titled "Elections 2010: The Morning After (Economic Issues for the Next President).

"He will have to make some choices that are hard, and some that are hard-er," he added.

Diokno, who served as budget secretary under the abbreviated Estrada presidency, said the next administration would also have to broaden the tax base and increase tax revenues to support economic growth.

He pointed out that the recent years' underspending in infrastructure—an area that could boost more coffers through eco-

NEXT PRESIDENT A11

Most wanted on May 10: An education president

By Philip C. Tubeza

(2nd of a series)

WHILE THE ARROYO ADMINISTRATION trumpets improvements in education as one of its major legacies, critics say it has actually deteriorated to a point where the Philippines now has fallen behind countries in Africa.

Former Education Undersecretary Jose Miguel Luz says it's a case of "sustained deterioration."

"It's flat. In the business, flat is not good. Going 1 or 2 percent up is not good. You've got to be going up 5, 8, or 10 percent," says Luz, associate dean

THINK ISSUES
i-TEAM *Report*
Fernando del Mundo
Chief

at the Asian Institute of Management's Center for Development Management.

"In flat business, if you are not getting better, you are falling farther and farther behind. And that's the problem. When we compare ourselves to where we were and compare ourselves to our

MOST WANTED A19

REALITY CHECK Lakas-Kampi-CMD standard-bearer Gilbert "Gibo" Teodoro is ordained by the elders from the ruling party.

Erap on Gibo: What a pity, he's most qualified

By Christian V. Esguerra

TACLOBAN CITY—THE STANDard-bearer of the defection-plagued Lakas-Kampi-CMD has found an unlikely ally in the man claiming to be "the only true opposition."

Ousted President Joseph Estrada expressed sympathy for Gilbert "Gibo" Teodoro on Tuesday night, saying it was a pity that despite his strengths as a candidate, key officials of the ruling party were deserting him.

"Hirang sangkaluyang eto," the standard-bearer of Pwersang Masang Pilipino said of Teodoro.

Estrada heaped praise on Teodoro, saying the former defense secretary and congressman was "the most qualified person" after himself among the other presidential contenders.

ERAP A-10

RP summer capital wilting in the heat

BAGUIO CITY—APRIL IS INDEED THE driest month—and its craziest jokes are those who come to this mountain city expecting relief from the summer heat.

As in most parts of the archipelago, the country's summer capital has experienced successive days of unusually high temperatures

RP SUMMER A-9

Basilan erupts anew; pols seen behind violence

By Julie S. Alipala
Inquirer Mindanao

ISABELA CITY—SOME POWERful figures, possibly politicians, may have instigated the bomb attacks carried out by Abu Sayyaf bandits here on Tuesday, police said.

"There were indications that the Abu Sayyaf was being used to sow violence, it was not pure terrorism," said Senior Supt. Antonio Mendoza, Basilan police chief.

Government troops and more than 60 Abu Sayyaf bandits led by Puruji Indanan, whose bomb-

er was among the dead in the coordinated attacks on the capital, clashed anew on Wednesday morning in Barangay Begang on the forested outskirts of the city.

Isabela Mayor Cherry Akbar and military officials said there had been no reports of casualties from the gun battle, but neither had there been any militants captured.

The day before, dozens of Abu Sayyaf gunmen, many disguised as police and military commandos, detonated bombs at a cathedral and school grandstand, and

BASILAN A11

Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

Gibo, Nograles trade barbs

By Gil Cabacungan and TJ Burgonio

SAYING THAT LAKAS-KAMPI-CMD STANDARD-bearer Gilbert Teodoro faced "irreversible defeat" in the May elections, House Speaker Prospero Nograles is consulting with former President Fidel V. Ramos and other senior Lakas leaders on how to save the party and stop the wave of defections.

"Either support irreversible for the Lakas-Kampi-CMD standard-bearer, it sent a message to choose him in the first place. In the past several months that he promised to reverse the trend of defeat, nothing happened. It only led to defections left and right, and disenchantment everywhere," Nograles said in a statement.

Nograles declined that Teodoro can win, even in the administration's traditional bailiwick of Mindanao, because he said he has done nothing while the coalition's key leaders in the region jump to rival parties.

He said that it "pained" him to say the Lakas-Kampi-CMD "self-lapsing" which was why he is moving to remind up all the grassfed senior members to help steer the party in the right direction and positively adopt another candidate.

NOGRALES

TEODORO

But party official Cavite Rep. Eguilo Ilastriga Jr. said that it was too late for the party to adopt another candidate.

And it would set a bad example for the youth for a party to ditch its standard-bearer in the middle of a campaign just because he or she was trailing badly in the surveys, he said.

Nograles continued his tirade against Teodoro for the fourth straight day as Lakas Kampi continued to suffer from defections.

In Iloilo City where he was on a campaign sortie, Teodoro said of Nograles' threat to support another presidential candidate: "He should first win as mayor before he dare dictate."

Nograles is running for mayor of Davao City against the daughter of incumbent Mayor Rodrigo Duterte.

"He should not vent his frustrations on me. I won't dignify his comments," Teodoro told reporters before facing a rally of more than 5,000 supporters of former Junior Interior Secretary Raul Gonzalez, the latter's son, Rep. Raul Gonzalez Jr., and their allies Tuesday night.

Ilosio's caution, he warned party officials against using him or the party as an excuse to defect to other camps.

Taking a subtle swipe at the defectors, Teodoro said he picked Edu Manzano, who is also an Ilonggo, for his running mate because he was "trustworthy."

Teodoro also found an ally in the elder Gonzalez, who believed Nograles' threat to back the party.

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"We don't abandon the party. Only rats abandon a sinking ship. It's not yet sinking," he told reporters.

"What could be contributor to this? He has a big constituency but we don't know his problems there [in Davao]. He is facing a great fight," he said of Nograles.

Gonzalez, the former chief presidential legal counsel, said it was "unjustly" of Nograles to blame Teodoro for the woes of Lakas party members.

He said Nograles' moves "would be seen as intended to cripple the party," but stopped short of saying this constituted grounds for his expulsion.

Teodoro's spokesperson, Mike Toledo, disputed Nograles' criticism that Teodoro is spending time in Mindanao to campaign in small provinces rather than the vote-rich ones.

"While Gibo has never had any votes in Surnigao, he has been to Davao for three times and to Compostela Valley twice, contrary to what Speaker Nograles is saying," Toledo said.

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No need for psycho test—Comelec

CANDIDATES RUNNING IN THE May 10 national and local elections are not required to undergo psychological testing, the Commission on Elections (Comelec) said.

"The psychological test is not required under the law. The same goes for drug tests," Comelec spokesperson Jayson Andrew said.

"Basic if the candidates want to take psychological tests to debunk rumors, that's entirely their problem," he said.

The Comelec issued the statement following reports that some candidates for national office were challenging each other to undergo mental health exams.

The Commission does not mandate that candidates for the highest office should undergo and submit proof of mental or psychological health to the Comelec.

Nacionalista Party presidential candidate Sen. Manuel Villar has challenged Liberal Party candidate Sen. Benigno Aquino III, who has been campaigning the candidate preference surveys, to undergo a psychological exam to prove that he was mentally and psychologically fit to be president.

Aquino reserved that Villar, having issued the challenge, should take the test first.

The MSD-CBN network last week aired a news report claiming that Aquino had suffered from depression when he was 16 years old based on a document penned on a letterhead of the Ateneo de Manila University psychology department and signed by Fr. Tito Cañaveral, S.J.

Both the Ateneo and Cañaveral have declared the document as bogus.

—Kristine L. Alave

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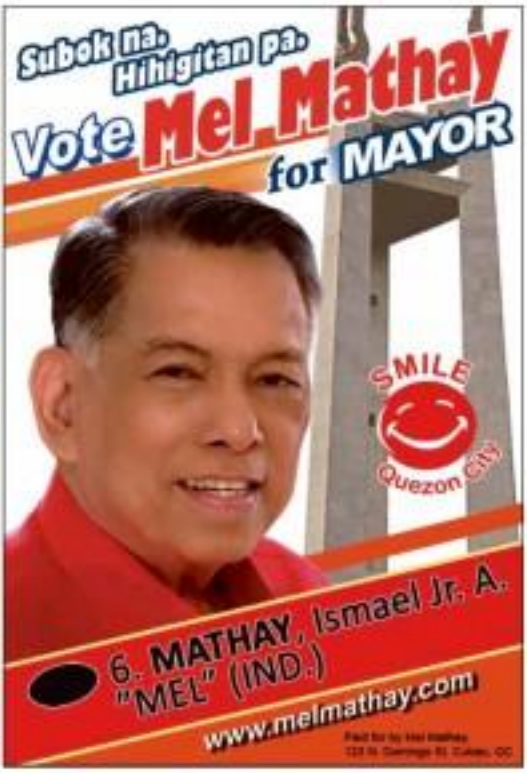

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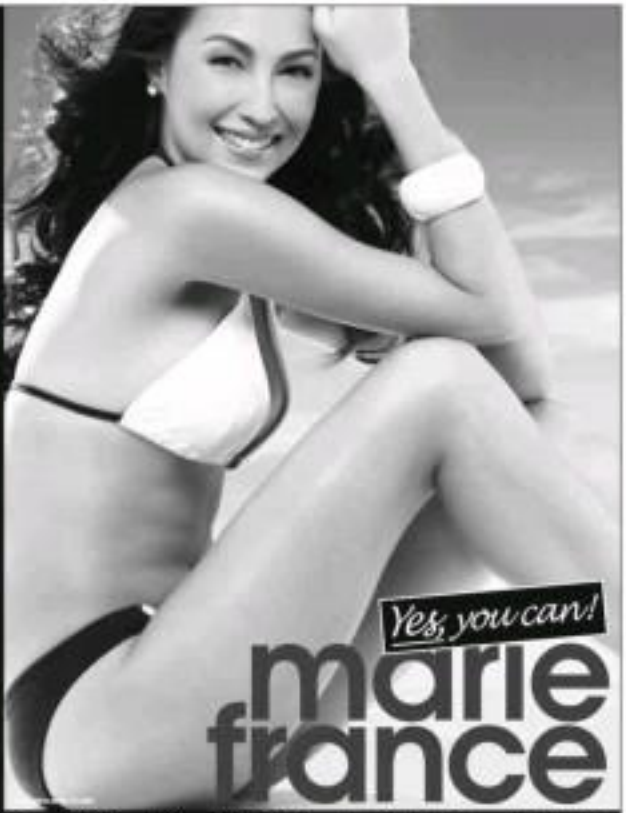

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Ampatuan transferred to Bicutan jail tomorrow

By Doris Pisa-Bragat

ANDAL AMPATUAN JR., THE principal suspect in the gruesome massacre of 57 people in Maguindanao last year, will be transferred tomorrow to a special detention facility in Camp Bagong Diwa headquarters of the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) in Taguig, according to Acting Justice Secretary Alberto Agra.

Ampatuan Jr., the mayor of Datu Unsay town in Maguindanao, had been held in the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) office in Manila since last seven days after the Nov. 23 massacre.

Agra, whose office has supervision over the NBI, ordered Andal's transfer after the Supreme Court on Tuesday granted the Department of Justice's (DOJ) petition to transfer the high-profile detainee to the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology facility in Bicutan.

Transfer of venue

The high court also granted the DOJ's petition to transfer the venue of the trial from the Philippine National Police (PNP) headquarters in Camp Crame, Quezon City to Camp Bagong Diwa.

PNP officials welcomed the decision, stating it would simplify the security process of having to transport Ampatuan Jr. over the NBI in Manila to Camp Crame every time there is a hearing.

According to Chief Supt. Leonardo Espina, PNP spokesperson, the operations of some of their units had been greatly affected since the hearing of the Maguindanao massacre case started early this year. In particular, it affected the operations of the Intelligence Training Group, the PNP Finance Service and the police crossmatch, he added.

"So far there are no reports of threats or risks in his transfer. The NBI is finalizing security details to ensure Andal's safety," said Agra.

ANDAL AMPATUAN

Up to judge

As for other detained suspects in the massacre, a spokesperson for the Supreme Court said it would be up to Quezon City Regional Trial Court Judge Jocelyn Solis-Reyes, who is conducting the murder trial, to order their transfer.

The DND is hoping the court will also order the relocation of 69 other massacre suspects detained at Camp Crame, mostly policemen.

Nilles have been rehabilitating a five-storey building in Camp Bagong Diwa to hold all massacre suspects—which could go up to 200. The first level of the building, which used to house a canteen and was used for some detainees, has been converted into an air-conditioned courtroom. The upper levels are being turned into security offices and detention cells.

"We've been ready since last month," said Senior Insp. Lloyd Gonzaga, deputy warden of the facility, who accompanied the Inquirer around the complex yesterday.

Walking distance

With this setup, Ampatuan Jr. will merely have to walk 100 meters down from the building's fourth floor to attend his trial, he said.

Six detainees room will be one of four cells measuring around 64 square meters, each furnished with 21 bunk beds and toilet and bath facilities.

The fifth floor is an open roof deck where inmates can exercise.

Agra said the police will deploy more guards and increase security measures in the camp once Ampatuan is brought there.

The Ampatuans are members of a prominent political family. Insurers or have their own private army. Blamed for the massacre of the town's mayoral candidate and 57 others, including 30 journalists, on Nov. 23 massacre were members and supporters of the Maguindanao clan, political rivals of the Ampatuans, and 20 journalists who were accompanying the group to the provincial Commission on Elections. With reports by Nancy Carvajal, Mike Blanche and Angel Atienza

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SolGen to oppose scrapping of PET

THE OFFICE OF THE SOLICITOR GENERAL will oppose a petition filed before the Supreme Court by President Macapagal-Arroyo's election lawyer seeking to abolish the Presidential Electoral Tribunal (PET) for being unconstitutional.

Acting Justice Secretary Alberto Agra, who is the concerned cabinet official, said he agrees with the position taken by lawyer Romulo Macalintal that the Supreme Court violated the Constitution when it created the PET with a separate budget, administrative staff and its own seal.

The PET is composed of all 15 high court justices, with the chief justice sitting as ex-officio chair and the senior justice as member.

In his petition, filed April 5, Macalintal argued that under Section 4 Article VII of the Constitution, "it is the Supreme Court sitting en banc and not any tribunal which shall be the sole judge of all contests relating to the election, returns and qualifications of the president or vice president."

Macalintal argued that while the Supreme Court has the authority to promulgate the rules for hearing electoral protests, it cannot create a separate tribunal with a separate budgetary allocation, personnel and confidential employees.

"We will file our comment very soon. My view is different from that of Atty. Macalintal and he knows that," said Agra. The OSG was last week ordered by the high court to file comment within 30 days.

Agra's counterpart in DOJ argued that the creation of the PET was constitutional and affirmed by the Commission.

The PET was allocated ₱55.971 million budget for 2010 under the General Appropriations Act.

Macalintal also claimed that the creation of the PET violated Section 12 Article VIII of the Constitution that prohibits members of the judiciary from sitting in any agency performing quasi-judicial functions.

He pointed out that the Supreme Court itself held that the PET exercises quasi-judicial power and this could lead to the "anomaly" of having the decision of the PET being appealed for review before a Supreme Court presided over by the very same PET members. Evan Paredes

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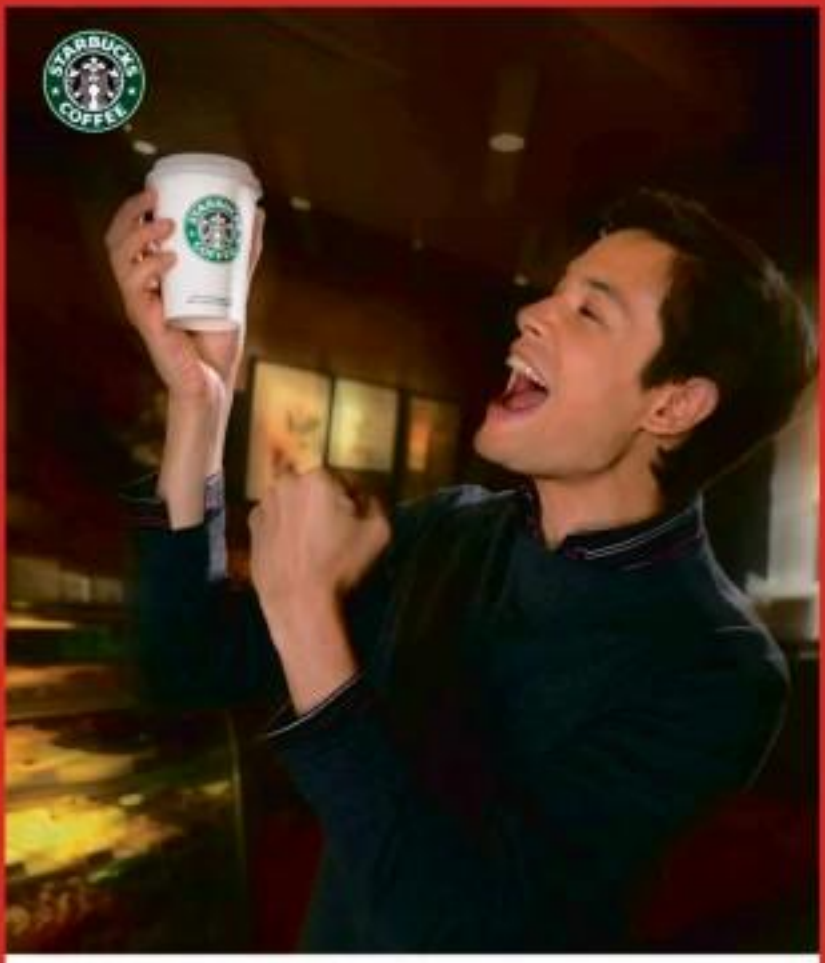
No Pinoys hurt in China quake

THE DEPARTMENT OF Foreign Affairs (DFA) yesterday said that there were no foreign nationals injured in the 6.9-magnitude earthquake that hit the Chinese province on Wednesday.

Citing a report from the Philippine Embassy in Beijing, the DFA said it received word of the absence from the Public Security Bureau (PSB) of the People's Republic of China.

Based on embassy records as of 2008, there are only nine Filipinos in Qinghai province, which is a plateau that is sparsely populated. Qaila D. Ikdano



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TIGILAN NA ANG KASINUNGALINGAN.

Milyung-milyong Pilipino ang nakikinabang sa mga batas na ipinaglaban ni Mar Roxas, tulad ng Cheaper Medicines Law, Tax Exemption for Minimum Wage Earners Law, atbp. Wala pa ring tigil sa pagbabato ng putik ang mga nagnanais sumira sa kanyang mabuting pangalan. Ilang linggo nang lumalabas sa mga dyaryo ang mga patalastas na puno ng kasinungalingan.

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• Sa Biron version, bababa ng 80-90% ang presyo ng 1500 gamot.	• **BUMABA NA** ng aabot sa **80%** ang presyo ng **200** sa pinakamahahalagang gamot. o Mas marami pang gamot ang bababa ang presyo sa napipintong pagpasok ng administrasyong Aquino-Roxas.
• Kumontra si Loren Legarda sa Roxas version ng Cheaper Medicines Law.	• Hindi kailanman kumontra si Legarda habang nakahain ang batas. Sa isang unanimous vote, **BUMOTO ANG BUONG SENADO AT KONGRESO** kabilang sina Biron, **LEGARDA**, at Villar para ipasa ang Cheaper Medicines Law ni Roxas. Bakit bigla silang **BUMABALIGTAD** at **SINISIRAAN** ito ngayon?
• Ang Price Board na itinutulak ng Biron version, kung saan kabilang ang mga malalaking kumpanya ng gamot, ay mas mabuti para sa taumbayan.	• Nakasalalay sa Presidente ang pagbaba ng presyo; **BUKAS** at makikita ng lahat ang **PANANAGUTAN** ng isang opisinang **SUMUMPANG PAGSILBIHAN** ang **MAMAMAYAN.** o ...vs. Price Board na naglalaman ng kinatawan ng malalaking kumpanya ng gamot, na kumikilos ng **PATAGO** at ang **TANGING PANANAGUTAN AY ANG SA SARILI NILANG KITA.** o ...Ano na ba ang napala natin sa mga board? Energy Regulatory Commission, Toll Regulatory Board, Road Users Tax Board—lahat may bahid ng **KATIWALIAN.**
• Si Mar Roxas ang principal sponsor ng E-VAT Law.	• **HINDI** si Mar Roxas ang *principal sponsor* ng E-VAT Law. o ...Sa kabilang banda, siya ang principal author ng **TAX EXEMPTION FOR MINIMUM WAGE EARNERS LAW** na nagbabalik ng pera sa bulsa ng taumbayan.
• Pinahirapan ng E-VAT ang maraming Pilipino.	• **WALANG MASAMA SA BUWIS.** Sa buwis nanggagaling lahat ng serbisyo ng gobyerno. **ANG MASAMA, KAPAG NINANAKAW ANG BUWIS.**

Tingnan sa **www.senate.gov.ph** kung sino talaga ang sponsor, author, at mga bumoto sa lahat ng nabanggit na batas.

- Si Rep. Biron at ang kanyang pamilya ang **NAGMAMAY-ARI NG PHARMAWEALTH, INC.**, isang kumpanya ng gamot na mawawalan ng kita kapag naipatupad ang Mar Roxas Cheaper Medicines Law.
- Halos **DALAWANG MILYONG PISO** na ang **NAGAGASTOS** sa mga **PATALASTAS.** Alam ba ng People's Movement Against Poverty—na nakapirma sa ilalim nito— na may gayong kalaki silang pondo, na **GINAGAMIT LAMANG PARA MANIRA NG KAPWA** sa halip na langat ang Pilipino mula sa kahirapan?
- Si Rep. Teddy Locsin ang tunay na may-akda ng House Version. Walang kinalaman si Suplico sa batas dahil hindi na siya congressman noong ipinasa ito. Dahil ba **KAALYADO NI SUPLICO SINA VILLAR, LEGARDA AT BIRON** kaya isinisiksik ang pangalan niya sa usapang ito?

Pulitika na lang ba talaga ang nagdidikta sa lahat?
Ano ang aasahan natin sa mga taong ang kampanya ay
pinatatakbo ng kasinungalingan?

SINO NGAYON ANG NAGSASABI NG TOTOO?

National Institute for Policy Studies
2F Makinoo Bldg., Claro Recto Ave., 1231 Makati City, Philippines
Telephone: (632) 893-7483 / 893-6304 Telefax: (632) 893-6216
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Dethroned beauty rejects condition for reinstatement

By Ephrain Aguilar
Inquirer Southern Luzon

LEGAZPI CITY—LAWYERS OF dethroned beauty queen Maria Venus Raj have asked the Binibining Pilipinas pageant organizers on Wednesday to reinstate Raj without any conditions and to clear her name of any wrongdoing.

Also, the reinstatement should not be done for humanitarian reasons, they added in a letter to Binibining Pilipinas Charities Inc. (BPCI) on Tuesday.

The BPCI announced on Sunday it was giving Raj a chance to reclaim the Binibining Pilipinas title provided that she obtained a valid passport. The pageant organizer also said it had recovered Raj's donation and was giving her the chance "for humanitarian reasons."

The Bicolana beauty was dethroned on March 20 due to inconsistencies in her birthrecords. She explained that she was too poor to go to court to correct the inconsistencies...which were not of her doing in the first place.

No requirement

"A passport was never a requirement for joining and even winning, the Mr. Pilipinas title ... Accordingly, it should not be made a condition for her reinstatement," lawyers Gigi Ibrahim, Dikkert Berbotche and Teodoro Pastrana said.

Raj found another ally in fellow Bicolana, Sen. Francis Escudero, who said the BPCI should reassure her safety on the hunt of her rightful claim to the crown.

Raj, in a statement sent to the Inquirer Wednesday morning, said she was grateful for the BPCI for the reconsideration but again asked the BPCI to clear her reputation.

"Gusto man po ako sa isang malit up to pumiba lamang, ayaw po sa akin ng isang tao na ang integridad at kredibilidad ay isang uri ng tsismisan lang. (Though I come from a poor family, my mother taught me the value of integrity and credibility)," Raj told the Inquirer.

She said the accusation of misrepresentation, which the BPCI had pointed to as the ground for her dethronement, tarnished her reputation and cast doubts on her right to the Bb. Pilipinas title.

Internet angels

Raj has attracted an increasing number of online supporters.

A published report (not to be confused with quoted an unnamed representative of the Atlanta Group as saying Raj was "snubbing" pageant training sessions, drew members Internet flames.

On the Facebook fan page "Bring her home Raj to remain as Bb. Pilipinas Universe 2010," netizens rushed to Raj's defense. "Upon Venus hears that black propaganda blinks pause, BPCI. Venus may have nothing in life but we have the angels helping her. She has her family and no. Like rose of that," said one post.

Raj, in her own response, said she was ready to join the training session as soon as she was reinstated. She also said she had signed with her lawyers Bam, Cameraman Jun to gather the documents needed for her passport application.

Online survey

Raj's raging supporters have also put her on top of an online survey of Miss Universe candidates on the Spanish website www.20minutos.es.

In a span of just one day, Raj, 25, a part-time model, jumped from number 20 to the top of the survey with 30 percent votes, over 2,000 votes—overtaking 26 other Miss Universe candidates.

MORONE 43 HUNGER STRIKE
A man shows his support for the 43 health workers arrested by military on suspicion of being communist rebels. He has joined the so-called Morong 43 on a hunger strike to protest their detention. They have been in military custody for at least 68 days.

Sumilao farmers to get titles, finally

By Ryan D. Rosario
Inquirer Mindanao

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—After two years of waiting, the Sumilao farmers will finally obtain title to a portion of the 144-hectare land in Bukidnon that they have been claiming and which was awarded to them under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP).

The turnover of 144 titles has been scheduled for Friday in front of the gate of the San Miguel Corp.-owned property in San Vicente, Sumilao, Bukidnon, said Anthony Marmon, executive director of nongovernment organization, Kalasag-an tanga sa Kamalayan ng Katutubohan at Pagpapaang Demokrasya—Kasanyo.

The titles will cover 58 of the 144 hectares that the farmers originally claimed under CARP and another 15 hectares outside of the disputed estate. The titles will be in the name of the Nueve-Sumilao Multi-Purpose Cooperative.

The Sumilao farmers were awarded the 144-hectare estate in September 1996 but the award was revoked in March 1997 after Malacañang approved the estate's conversion to agro-industrial use, thus escaping CARP coverage.

The farmers have since fought to get the land distributed to them. In 2009, the Supreme Court upheld the land use conversion order.

In 2004, claiming that the farmers had not complied with the land use conversion plan, the farmers began the long campaign to have the estate returned back to CARP coverage.

With the help of Church and other supporters, they launched in October 2007 their 40-day "Walk for Land, Walk for Justice" from Sumilao to Manila, a distance of 1,700 kilometers. By then, San Miguel had acquired ownership of the estate when it put up a long-existing and unopposed bidding under the San Miguel Stock Inc. (SMFI).

In December 2007, President Macapagal-Arroyo revoked the land use conversion order and placed the estate under CARP coverage again. This forced San Miguel to sit down with the farmers and their Church backers to strike a settlement formula.

In March 2008, a compromise deal was struck. Under the terms of the deal, 80 of the 144 hectares would be released to the claimant farmers. San Miguel was to acquire the balance of 64 hectares outside the disputed estate for distribution to the farmers.

Although welcoming the development, Marmon expressed dismay over the piecemeal distribution which he said did not give justice to their sacrifices.

Last month, still not in possession of the titles, the farmers set up camp near the gate of the San Vicente property to express their "anguish over the seeming lack of urgency on the part of DAR and SMC."

The turnover ceremony on Friday will be marked by a Mass and a dialogue for setting a timetable for the distribution of the balance of the land.

Malaybalay Bishop Honesto Pacana said the distribution of the titles over the initial 58 hectares was "another landmark in the history of the Sumilao farmers' struggle."

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
BUREAU OF FOOD AND DRUGS
Civic Drive, Filinvest Corporate City
Alabang, Muntinlupa City

PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

14 April 2010

DOH-FDA ADVISORY
No. 2010-004

Subject: FDA Findings on Wheat Flour Imported from Turkey

Following the recent report that wheat flours imported from Turkey are contaminated with mycotoxin, the FDA has intensively conducted market monitoring of these imported wheat flours to determine the presence of mycotoxin particularly *Ochratoxin A* and *Aflatoxin, total*.

In the interest of protecting public health, all are hereby informed that results of the exhaustive monitoring and analysis conducted showed that the samples of wheat flour collected are safe and fit for human consumption.

Rest assured that the FDA is committed in its mandate of continuously ensuring the safe supply of food products in the local market.

NAZARITA T. TACANDONG, RPh, MPA
Acting Director IV

GMA accepts 'green' award

By Christine O. Avendaño

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO yesterday joined the company of Prince Albert of Monaco and former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, when she, too, became a recipient of a prestigious conservation award given by the United States Congress.

On the last day of her two-day visit in Washington DC, the President was conferred the International Conservation Caucus Foundation (ICCF) Roosevelt Conservation Award in ceremonies held at Capitol Hill's Cannon House Building, according to a statement released by Malacañang.

Ms Arroyo was given the award for her "forefront efforts and advocacies in support of the Clean Energy Initiative," an international initiative to save familiar resources in the Pacific.

The Coral Triangle is a marine region hosting 76 percent of world marine species in the territories of the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Timor Leste.

In her acceptance speech, President Arroyo said it was her inspiration today to provide Filipinos, especially the poor, with food and resources, which could be done by "harmonizing economic growth and the needs of a healthy environment."

She also said her support for the initiative was a moral obligation to help preserve the beauty and bounty of nature for the next generation.

Rhett and Prince Albert were given the award in 2007 and 2009, respectively.

Malacañang said Filipinos should be proud of President Arroyo.

Several environmental groups, however, protested the conferment of the award on Ms Arroyo, claiming she did not deserve it.

Independent presidential aspirant and environmentalist Nicanor Perlas, who heads the Partido ng Sinmagal na Gerbasyunan (Pangunahin) party, also issued a statement urging the ICCF to "rethink its decision" to give Ms Arroyo the award.

"We are appalled by the ICCF's insensitivity to the extent of environmental destruction in the Philippines during the Arroyo presidency," stated Perlas.

Perlas cited the increased levels of land, chemical and waste pollution that has reached Metro Manila as the fourth most polluted city in the world.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, April 15, 2010
2nd Week of Easter

1st Reading: Acts 5:27-33
Gospel: Jn 3:31-36

Jesus said to Nicodemus, "No one comes from above is above all; he who comes from the earth belongs to the earth and his speech is of the earth. He who comes from heaven speaks of the things he has seen and heard; he bears witness to this but no one accepts his testimony. Whoever accepts his testimony acknowledges the truthfulness of God.

"The one sent by God speaks God's words and gives the Spirit without measure. For the Father loves the Son and has entrusted everything into his hands. Whoever believes in the Son lives with eternal life, but he who will not believe in the Son will never know life and will keep from the justice of God."

Commentary:

"He whom God has sent speaks God's own words."

In Jesus we see the face of God and hear the heart of God and know the mind of God and plumb the will of God.

In following Jesus we find our way to God.

(Servants Communications Foundation, Inc., 4 Rhyolite St. UP Village, Diliman, Quezon City, 1101 Philippines | Tel. Nos. 922-6265, 922-6267 | Fax No. 922-6265 | Email: info@servants.org.ph | Website: http://www.servants.org.ph | Publications: Pastoral Ambulance & Today's Christian Woman | Christian Missionaries to the Philippines | Christian Living Magazines in the Philippines | Christian Living Publications | Servants Communications Foundation, Inc. | Servants Publications | Servants Communications | Servants Publications | Servants Communications | Servants Publications | Servants Communications

Local, foreign investors prefer Noynoy, Gibo

By Doris C. Dumlao

FACTORY SALE

SEN. MENCHO Sajonia III remains the choice of local and foreign investors as the presidential candidate who can best promote a stable investment climate, according to the latest investor survey of Dumb Financial group (DG) Bank.

But sentiments for Aquino's cousin, administration candidate Gilbert Teodoro, is sharply gaining, according to the 1st Quarter 2010 ING Investor Outlook Survey, released yesterday.

Based on the results of the survey, the top three presidential candidates that investors in the country prefer to be next administration are Aquino (37 percent), Teodoro (28 percent) and Sen. Manuel Villar (23 percent).

Aquino maintained his 37 percent preference share from the previous ING survey results, which he found important in 2009.

However, Teodoro showed a sharp increase in investor preference to be the next president, up from 17 percent in the previous quarter.

Conversely, Villar, the self-made billionaire who built a business from property development, dropped 7 points from the 30 percent he registered in the previous survey.

Priorities economy

Based on the survey results, Filipino investors want the next president to prioritize economic policies, and those policies that promote education and trade relations.

The survey also showed that 48 percent of investors in the Philippines, both domestic and foreign, expect the May elections to positively impact the economy and their investments portfolios.

However, the same proportion of investors (48 percent) are not sure whether the effect of the elections will be positive or negative, a slight increase from 31 percent in the previous survey. This was attributed to the closely fought 2010 presidential race and the varying economic policies of the candidates.

When asked what policy programs the new president should prioritize in order to improve the investment climate in the Philippines, the investors' top three choices were: the economy (29 percent), education (14 percent) and trade relations (10 percent).

The latest quarterly ING survey showed the Philippine index remaining on the "optimistic" zone for the third consecutive quarter, climbing to 139 in the first quarter of 2010 from 134 in the fourth quarter of 2009.

The Philippine index has been moving up since bottoming at 69 when the global financial crisis hit in the first quarter 2009.

Albay gov joins Noy, shocks GMA party

From page A1

Kampi (CMD) leadership, local leaders and Mayor PSSM.

"I would like to thank them, especially our dear President, for the unique opportunity to work with them in the field of public service, economic policy and social transformation," he said in an e-mail to LP officials and close associates.

Salceda and Aquino were classmates at Ateneo de Manila University, they graduated in 1981. "My task is (to) make him win in Bicol on May 10, 2010," Salceda said.

The formal announcement of his defection to the LP is scheduled on April 20, after he returns from a medical checkup abroad.

Sources, like LP vice presidential candidate Sen. Manuel Roxas and the LP leadership have agreed to respect ... (it) local commitments, whether for mayor, councilor or congressman ... (and) by doing that changed to that I would now campaign for Sconce for president, Salceda said.

In a separate phone call, Lakas-Kampi-CMD vice president Prospero Pichay said he did not believe that Salceda, Mr. Arroyo's top economic adviser and ally, was leaving the coalition.

"I don't see any reason why he should leave (the party) and join Sconce," Pichay said, adding that a friend of Salceda's had denied the earlier report. "That could be a bum steer. You have to confirm that with Lister Jr."

Pichay claimed that the number of defections from the party was "marginal" but said Mr. Arroyo should do something about the matter.

"I think somehow she should look into the problem of our local leaders (leaving the party)," he said in Filipino, referring to the President.

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Political reality

The Lakas-Kampi-CMD chairman, Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez, conceded that there would be more defections. But she said not even Salceda's decision to join Aquino's Liberal Party (LP) would affect Sconce's candidacy.

"Positive himself said during the interviews were part of political realities that could do good in terms of purging the party of possible saboteurs.

THE GOOD TIMES President Arroyo congratulates her student and economic adviser Albay Gov. Joey Salceda in this photo taken last year. Behind the President is former Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro who's been left holding the bag with Salceda's defection to the Liberal Party, only the latest in what's appearing to be a series. CONTRIBUTED

"All the while, I was thinking that Joey (and) Secretary (Gilbert) Teodoro (will) go over the remaining allies of (the) in Bicol. Now it's (only) two of us," she said.

Word of honor

It was Salceda who called an emergency caucus of administration governors in Dasmariñas Subic in Pasig City on April 8, purportedly to consider a deputy clerk following the defection of Lakas-Kampi-CMD's top two leaders.

On that day, he and more than 20 governors signed a manifesto to "work hand-in-hand for overwhelming electoral majorities" for Teodoro, and urged mayor themselves from the National Caucus of Governors.

Prior to that, Salceda organized two consecutive political rallies for Teodoro in Albay.

Reminded yesterday that Salceda was among those who lobbied the Team Palafox declaration that weathered the party's support for Teodoro's candidacy, Villarosa said: "That puts in question his credibility of honor. We don't want to comment on this because this would be putting him on the spot."

Anyway, she said, there were other party leaders like Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman and local officials and congressmen who could call campaign for Teodoro in the province's behalf.

Asked if Mr. Arroyo would be hurt by Salceda's move, Villarosa said the President was "a strong lady."

Andaya, Teves, Romulo next?

She and Roquero denied reports that former Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya, Negros Oriental Rep. Jimmy Teves and Pasig Rep. Roman Romulo were holding Lakas-Kampi-CMD.

They said the three remained committed to Teodoro and the administration ticket.

Villarosa denied that the ruling party was in disarray or even in panic mode after the defections.

"We don't have any problems; we have money, unlike the others," she said.

Quezon City Secretary Atty. Rona said no Cabinet member was moving to other parties.

"I've been talking to practically all members of the Cabinet, (and) they are) supporting the President and, of course, the administration's ticket," he said.

GMA updated daily

Villarosa said the President was being updated daily on party developments. She said Mr. Arroyo's directive was to "do what you have to do and save (the) party."

Bishops condemn Basilan bombings

THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONference of the Philippines (CBCP) has condemned the bombings in Basilan that killed 15 people and destroyed a 60-year-old cathedral on Sunday.

In a statement, CBCP president Nereo Odchimar said: "The Catholic Church is against any form of violence, harassment, intimidation and threat to human life.

"The CBCP is condemning this violent atrocity against the Diocese of Basilan and the faithful, in particular," he added.

Basilan Bishop Martin Jumoad urged the government to put the province under military rule.

"It's time really for some real serious," Jumoad said. "Maybe now, the important thing is to stop this murderous Tuesday's attacks created no room to clamor for it (martial law)."

Damaged cathedral

Santa Isabel Cathedral was built in 1939 and has a seating capacity of 1,400. The explosion destroyed its stained glass windows and damaged the pews's concrete, the CBCP said.

Several service vehicles owned by priests attending a clergy conference in Zamboanga City were also damaged.

Masses have been suspended indefinitely, Jumoad said. "We will not allow any activities to be done inside the cathedral for the meantime depending on the assessment of structural experts," he said.

"Philanthropic efforts will be done immediately to make sure the cathedral is safe for church-goers," he said. Rosette G. Adel

Basilan clashes erupt anew; pols may be behind violence, say police

From page A1

down opened fire on civilians and troops after their apparent plan to strike the city failed on government forces fought back.

Police recovered the death toll at 14, not 15 as earlier reported.

It was one of the most unfortunate attacks on the Sayyaf, a small but violent al-Qaida-linked group blacklisted by Washington following two decades of deadly bombings, kidnappings and beheadings. The group is suspected of having received training and funds from Osama bin Laden's terror network.

Basilan Bishop Martin Jumoad condemned the attacks and called on the Bangsamoro autonomous.

"This attack is 75 percent damaged. We won't be able to hold Mass there temporarily," Jumoad said in an Agence France-Presse (AFP) report.

Hired guns?

Mendoza said the role of influential persons—whom he would not identify—in the city attacks also came out during the police interrogation of two captured Abu Sayyaf members.

"These attackers are seemingly instruments. Based on some accounts, they were hired, funded to wear the police uniforms and were directed to implement some attacks. And, of course, there's money involved," he said.

Pressed to identify those people, Mendoza said they could be politicians. He would not give any suggestions.

According to a report by The Associated Press (AP), Sinar Jahan Batua said the Abu Sayyaf gunmen might have planned to explode bombs and take over key roads as they ambushed soldiers in the city by burning buildings, kidnapping people and opening fire at random.

Batua said the attackers failed to capture any of the hostages they planned to kidnap.

Police said the bombs they placed exploded "prematurely."

This meant that the "synchronized" attacks—the group uses bangers at hand to conduct this operation," Mendoza said. The attacks, he added, could be a "last resource" of severely outnumbered.

The fatalities included three Marines, a policeman, three Abu Sayyaf members (including Radzmin Sirasar) and seven civilians, among them an elderly man who died of a heart attack at the height of the encounter.

In an AFP report, Mendoza said that the attacks appeared to have been well-planned, noting that the police and military outforces at least by the gunmen were bested now.

He said military intelligence had received information ahead of Tuesday's siege that Abu Sayyaf was planning an attack. "They were planning something big. This was why efforts are needed to stimulate the economy," it said.

Even so, Mendoza dismissed critics of the automated polls.

"The Comelec doesn't take threats lightly. Do the country a favor and stop scaring the living daylights out of everyone," Jimenez said in a press conference.

"A deliberate, concerted and continuous attempt to undermine the credibility of an election is an election offense," he said, adding that the penalty is one to six years imprisonment.

"If they think they have proof to believe that the elections will be a failure or rigged, they should present evidence to us instead of... fear-mongering," Jimenez said.

"We really can't see where these fears are coming from except from the desire to actually scuttle automation. Automation will proceed. It will

DANGEROUS ISLAND Marines patrol a highway along the village of Isugod in Isabela City, Basilan, on Wednesday as they continue their hunt for gunmen who set off bombs and attacked civilians on April 11. AFP

prove wins on the outskirts. Officials said that villagers sighted 60 men this layed members who were now apparently in Imok Pang, the group's second highest commander on the island.

Troops poured into the area overnight, sparking sporadic gun battles. Helicopter gunships moved in to support them, Mendoza said.

Mendoza said reporters at Camp Crame in Quezon City that the bandits briefly held a man, identified only as Hanif, whom they seized from his house in Isabela's Isabela in about 11 a.m. to pressure policemen and Marines from retaliating. The man was freed unscathed on hours later.

The gun battle spread to Sahara and Barangay Purgatorio and the city plaza as the bandits engaged in various diversions.

"The bandits also sometimes forcibly entered several houses to escape the Marines and policemen. The firefights was very intense in Barangay Sagang," Mendoza said.

A getaway vehicle was recovered in the clearing operations, inside of which were more improvised bombs, the AFP report said.

Major security menace

The Abu Sayyaf is the smallest of at least four major groups fighting for decades for a separate homeland in the predominantly Catholic Mindanao. The government has often dismissed the Abu Sayyaf as a bandit group crippled by relentless US-backed military offensives.

But the Abu Sayyaf, authorities said, has been more than 200 fighters, has periodically carried ambushes with high-profile attacks and is still considered a major security menace. With reports from Philip C. Tubeza, Norman Bordadora and Alan Victoria, Inquirer Research

Biz groups join clamor for parallel vote count

From page A1

(PCOS) machines could end.

Lim and MAP chair Solicitor Rodriga said that should there be a discrepancy in at least 1 percent of the votes per machine, the Comelec could order a recount of all the votes covered by that particular machine.

"It is so unreasonable for Comelec not to accept this because it doesn't cost much," Lim said.

He said that the Comelec had an P11.3-billion budget for an initiation and another P18 billion for the conduct of the elections. He estimated that some P4 billion remained from the allocation for the manual count.

Not in automation law

Comelec spokesperson James Jimenez said that the automation law did not allow a parallel manual count.

"It's not included in the law," he said.

Election Commissioner Gerardo Larrazabal said the poll body was willing to meet with the PBBC and other groups to discuss their concerns.

Ubiña say that the manual count is allowed under Section 13 of the Automation Code (Republic Act No. 9369).

It says that the automated election system "shall be designed to include a contingency plan in case of a system breakdown or any such eventuality which shall result in the delay, obstruction or nonperformance of the electoral process."

Failure not an option

Lim stressed that a failure of elections was not an option, hinting that this could lead to anarchy people power revolution.

Ubiña said that the PBBP supported the proposal, soon-to-be-passed method recommended by respected information technology professionals in a news briefing on Tuesday to eliminate fraud and manipulation in the automated election that will be people.

"We trust that the Comelec's immediate adoption of this backup system will mitigate, if not eliminate, the desperation of many about the credibility of the automated election system and the results that it will deliver," said an IBBP statement released to reporters.

Fear-mongering

"There is indeed no turning back on the automated elections. Failure of elections is not an option. A scenario of a failure of elections is not good for the national psyche and particularly bad for business when entrenched

well planned and apparently they were well funded," he said.

"I don't think there was a bullet out of intelligence on our part because we were pursuing certain leads (ahead of the attack)," Bordadora said.

Lockdown

As questions arose over how the militants were able to slip into the heart of Isabela undetected, troops and police placed the city of 150,000 under lockdown yesterday.

Business establishments, banks and government offices were closed.

Jessie Tan, a grocery store owner, said his storefronts were screening customers because they might be dealing with terrorists already.

About 300 Marines and Special Forces troops entered road blocks and kept guard on vital installations, while at least two armored personnel carriers prowled the streets.

Naval patrol boats were also deployed to watch coastal areas to prevent the attackers from escaping by sea, the military said.

Fresh troops belonging to the 45-trained Army elite force were deployed to Basilan to pursue the bandits, Navy spokesperson Lt. Col. Edgard Arevalo said in a report at Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City yesterday.

President Macapagal-Arroyo, who is in Russia for a state visit, told Foreign Secretary Leon Dalmadiana by phone to oversee operations aimed at pursuing the bandits and securing the province, and to reactivate the anti-terrorism task force.

Fresh fighting

Panglima Indanan reportedly fled with three men toward a mountainous area, while at least two armored personnel carriers prowled the streets.

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Next president will inherit near-empty gov't coffers, say economists

From page A1

nomic growth—meant that revenue would have to come from higher taxes.

Cut taxes, raise VAT

Dinkas stopped short, however, of proposing an outright tax hike, suggesting instead that the new administration implement a mix of tax rate adjustments that would see lower corporate and personal income taxes, while raising easy-to-collect levies like the value-added tax (VAT).

"We can reduce corporate income tax from 30 to 15 percent, but has to be accompanied by rationalizing fiscal incentives," he said.

He added that the personal income tax rate should also be brought down to an average of 16 percent.

In general, lower tax rates tend to boost consumption as people's disposable incomes increase.

However, the next president will almost certainly have to compromise for the reduced income with an increase in the unpopular VAT from 12 to 15 percent, Dinkas said.

Taxes in first 100 days

He said the next president should also press Congress to reform excise taxes on cigarettes and tobacco as the so-called "sin taxes," which met significant opposition from lobbyists during past attempts to reform them.

"The next taxes must be approved by the new Congress within the first 100 days," Dinkas said. "Otherwise, the reforms Duterte would be wrong. People should see it as part of a package of reforms that will benefit everyone eventually."

UP economics professor Fe Ilao Mendiola—another former administration cabinet official, who served as socioeconomic planning secretary—laid out a menu of priority investment programs that the next administration must implement to jump-start economic growth.

Invest in power

The former chief of the National Economic and Development Authority said the government should focus on bringing in investments in the power sector, regardless of the controversies that made deals often result.

In particular, Mendiola noted that a lack of new resources would almost certainly mean that the government would have to guarantee a certain level of return for any prospective power plant builder.

"What we have to agree on is not to punish utilities when we see 20-20 hindsight on [government's] foresees that were made using available assumptions at present," Mendiola said. "We need to limit our [power] output power plants to zero."

Toll roads, LRT lines

Mendiola also said the incoming government must prioritize more build-operate-transfer deals for toll roads around the country and new light railroad lines that will commuters like Metro Manila. The new leader should also prioritize investments in new sources of potable water.

Dinkas included projects, Mendiola said, would have the benefit of creating new jobs and spawning other industries that support them.

For his part, economist Arsenio Balisacan pointed out that the next administration should focus on improving the agricultural sector where two-thirds of the country's poorest workers living.

Food security

Government policies, however, should move away from deals for the south amidst instead of doing as just for 30 percent of the electorate as a contingency should the counting machines fail.

First rough test for manual ballots

"Where would they bring unaudited ballots meant for 30 percent of the electorate when they still do not know in which places the voting machines would fail?" said Jose de Venecia III, a PBBP statistical modeling and the party's spokesperson from the city.

"There is no way they can realistically deploy three manual ballots throughout the entire country in every supposed voting glitches from Apayao to Jolo, within the time frame set for voting. The country's resources to print enough manual ballots for the entire electorate," De Venecia said. With reports from Philip C. Tubeza, Norman Bordadora and Alan Victoria, Inquirer Research

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

Glitches

IT IS BECOMING EVER CLEARER THAT THE COMmission on Elections underrates "success"—as in, a successful test run, a successful second day of the overseas absentee vote—differently from the general public.

When the first overseas-based Filipinos cast their ballots for the May 10 elections over the weekend, attention was

EDITORIAL focused on the use of the precinct-count optical scan (PCOS) machines deployed in Hong Kong and Singapore. (Other overseas Filipinos voting at other countries have to do it manually.) Unfortunately, during the second day of the month-long vote at the Rajasthan Riwaz(Leisure) Center, two PCOS machines malfunctioned; the replacement machine for one was worked right away, but none of the two substitutes for the other malfunctioning machine did. It was only after technicians reinstalled the original equipment that the vote in that precinct got underway.

The glitch, which resulted in a delay of the voting by a few hours, was caused by a "combination of cold and humidity," said Smartmatic Asia president Cesar Flores. Apparently, the PCOS machines were stored in a room that was "a little humid," while the ballots were kept in an air-conditioned place. When these were brought out of that room, the "ballots expanded."

Commissioner Gregorio Larrazabal said the temporary glitches were nothing to worry about. "We saw this happen and the backup kicked in right away."

Well, actually, no. The backup for the first malfunctioning machine "kicked in" about 45 minutes after the glitch—nothing to worry about when voters have 30 days to vote, but definitely worrisome in a one-day voting schedule, which is the case back home. And both backups for the second machine failed too. The original machine finally "kicked in," but after about a two-hour delay.

None of this is to say that the ongoing overseas absentee voting is a failure; only about a fourth of all registered overseas voters still use the PCOS machines, and the rate of the combined 127,000 voters in Singapore and Hong Kong have about three weeks more to vote. But the glitches hardly increase public confidence in the all-new system of the automated election system in the Philippines, where the voters' roll is quite literally a hundred times longer than that for the overseas absentee vote.

The malfunctioning of the PCOS machines seem to be sufficiently explained by the science of a "combination of cold and humidity," but the public's growing frustration with the Comelec and its election partner Smartmatic is fed precisely by the lack of science behind the preparations.

Didn't Smartmatic already figure out that ballots easily expand and curl up at the edges when transported from a climate-controlled room to a humid election precinct? We understand the need for both the machines and the ballots to be "acclimatized," in Flores' description, but did Smartmatic realize that only now? And why did the Comelec choose a system that is vulnerable even to mild changes in temperature?

The result from the first news reports about the absentee voting has thus been predictable: an increase in public skepticism about whether the automated election system is robust enough to withstand heavy use, during what may well be another summer-soaked day.

The Comelec has said before that it was preparing contingency plans for a 30-percent failure rate. If that were to happen, some 30 percent of the precincts would have to revert to manual voting. That seems an unconscionably high ratio—and considering that the margin of about 10-percentage points might spell the difference between one presidential candidate's victory over another, a worryingly high number that political operators and opportunists can attempt to take advantage of.

Comelec spokesman James Jimenez waved sanguinary about the impact of such a high failure rate. "It's not going to affect the results. We don't expect the machines to malfunction at the same time. The voting and transmission will still continue." The results may not be affected, in the sense that a general failure of elections will have to be declared; but to the sense of ensuring opportunities for election fraud the old-fashioned way, a 30-percent failure rate can certainly impact on the true results of the elections.

What makes matters worse is that, even as of this late date, the protocols for the switch to manual voting at the precinct level have not yet been circulated. Like we said, preparation is a science.

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Voices

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

"THE LIFE SUPREME COURT CHIEF JUSTice Jose Abad Santos came to mind when I read 'The only option' (Viewpoint, 4/13/10)." Mar Pendaliga e-mailed from Yonkers, New York.

Chief Justice wouldn't swear allegiance to the Japanese occupiers. They executed him. Chief Justice Ullano beside JC didn't buckle before Eduardo Cojuangco and Ilianov zombie. The "Final Push" impeached him.

Both were made of similar stuff. Inside assured: "The Court didn't succumb to coercion like the extreme love and the Marcos fear.

"Can you say that of justices who exiled President Arroyo has authority to pick Chief Justice Reynato Puno's successor, in violation of the Constitution? I don't think so. Mrs. Arroyo packed the Court with those who do her bidding ...Her decisions make the Court—the last bastion against absolute authority."

* * *

The 2002 "diary stroke" cited in "The only option" pale beside today's phony themed Oscarstyle psychological exposé on Sen. Benigno Aquino III, retired professor Roberto Salandanan in horoscope commented. "If I recall correctly, journalists say radical panic is innate reaction by a biased source. Shakespeare he quoted."

Yet and no. Look at how the bogus document was handled under "the new impartial journalism of innocence." The camera's history will be back. So, the press can't let its guard down.

Most dailies ignored the hoax early on. Some rushed to published it. An ABS-CBN editor/ conference summed a copy handed by a "Malacañang diary source," Maria Ressa writes. A reporter/anchor should raise red flag but didn't. "Transcription, we decided to do the story and see if it is the coming days."

"True or false"? Truth is a non-negotiable yardstick. This exercise, however, is often compromised when unanimous race to be first is clear from the start. Confirm the parameters by then, its good and, second, the sheer volume of unauthenticated claims.

A flood of e-mail besieged ABS-CBN with one query: "Is this document authentic?" It was a denial for non-negotiable enemies.

"We rushed to verify," Ressa revealed. She emailed Pe Caroncho Cabangs who debunked the report. Gin Ocampo, before, showed Arguiza the 'fit' look. "He spoke openly—to PNP, AFP, its executive branch—and denied the document's authenticity," ABS-CBN aired key points of the report simultaneously with rebuttals.

"It was the lively public denial of a salacious document masquerading as fact," was the self evaluation. The network disclosed sources without naming names. "We gave our viewers a glimpse of what was going on behind the scenes."

So verification and context partly using "a salacious document masquerading as fact"? Educating type is okay, provided you call the cops afterwards? In the event, candidates Manuel Villar and Loren Legarda lambred on with insinuations of moral instability.

Malacañang put on report? Thus, some insists, sensory nerve still functions? Good Housekeeping seals. Yet, ABS-CBN investigative reports into, for example, Villar's sunday real estate transactions doesn't feature of bias.

The network also resisted demands to eliminate sources of information. The Justice Perez Function Law extends a legal shield for this ethical duty. But RA 53 protects only print. It does not cover broadcast, a newcomer when the law was passed.

Explanation my rage Broadcasters should join print media which pressed for protection. A bloodshed loss 2005 unfortunately solidified the regime, as the Supreme Court noted in Chavez vs National Telecommunications.

* * *

Who of the President's midnight appointees had the definitions of Supreme Court Justices Antonio Carpio and Conchita Carpio Morales? (Non-seized justice," 3/29/08.)" Dr. Carolina Conception Dimaisip agreed.

Both judges told the Judicial Bar Council they'd refuse a midnight appointment as chief justice. Too many "midnighters," however, went by another name. "What does it profit a man if he gains his soul but loses the profession?"

Their number has spiraled. Math logical, for instance, is one of its nothing lists. Its capital. He is now CEO of the Tourism Infrastructure Zone Authority.

And the President's dominoes are set to go to dozens. "Bad, bad. The gangs all here." There is, for example, Cynthia Carreon, Shell stop-ping Ms. Arroyo attending Jerome and Imee's invited the Tourism Promotions Board; Bernadette Sembrin has been named trustee of the Philippine Institute of Traditional and Alternative Health Care. Estrella is daughter of former Agrarian Reform Secretary Conrado Estrella. That's fine. But she echoed raw and parroted rumors adequate representation of the unemployed& penalizes industry in the meantime?

Physicians and indigent patients seek access to a broader range of affordable natural health products. But have a care in the forthcoming implementing guidelines. A still unwritten FDA regulations with provisions of the Traditional and Alternative Medicine Act of 1997. The law aims to integrate natural health products into our national health delivery system. Ms. Estrella made a liminal lump into multi-page products. Those that limited requirements might have to apply for 63 Filipino herbal products companies, let alone million major tribe-tes.

After June 30, the incoming president could review midnight appointments. Ex Mendanez Carreon and Estrella seem to be pulled for reappointment. Ms. Arroyo's Supreme already fulfilled the angle of Carpio who withdrew his candidacy out of deliberation.

(Email: jmercado@gmail.com)

Crazy

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

A FRIEND ASKED ME SOME WEEKS AGO, "What exactly does bipolar mean?"

I said as far as I knew it was the clinical term for manic depressive, a disorder characterized by violent mood swings, literally from one pole to the other. I said it often involved loss of identity or confusion about it. But with moderate, bipolar people could live fully functional lives. I said I knew all this because I knew people who were.

And then I asked why he asked. Because, he answered, I heard that the Villar campaign was going to produce documents that show Noynoy Aquino to be bipolar.

I laughed out loud. Jesus, I said, those guys must be getting desperate. Noynoy bipolar? Maybe he suffers from ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder). Hell, I have that syndrome. But then, I went on, this country is full of people with ADHD. I myself seem to be surrounded by them. That is in the form of company who cannot carry a conversation for a few minutes without calling Bonnie answering their cell phones, without barking at white motorists walking, or ignominiously for the readers but not confined to them) without their eyes wandering around a room, scanning for prey.

As far as I know, I said, Noynoy doesn't seem to be confined about his identity. Unlike other people who don't know whether they're rich or poor, who do not know whether they are opposition or administration, who do not know whether they are buying pieces or beating votes.

Well, as it turned out...The evaluation wouldn't be about bipolar; it would be about something else. But I'm still laughing my head off. The bipolar image of course has instilled in the reporters and called them like. I myself do not know why anyone should take them seriously enough to even call them like.

We are a country where entertainers want to become politicians and politicians want to become entertainers. We know that because the most serious caper in recent years was the one about Hayden Kho exposing himself and Katrina Halili to the viewing public. And we know it was serious because it catapulted Bong Revilla to the top of the senatorial pack in the surveys. Obviously the public wants more public service exposés of the kind, in aid of legislation. And we worry that we might have a president who is crazy?

We are a country where candidates sing and dance on the stage, though I don't know that voters will find the spectacle of Miriam Santiago doing that entertaining. Maybe, if I recall, was the original "Bandila" II you don't know why, where have you been?), which she proved by putting a gun on her table and facing the police arrest her after she goaded People'sgenius to signal, cupid Makabulang, and they did. She and Loren Bonnie Legarda Baleta, Gilda Cordero-Fernando, Ging Deles, Jamby Madrigal, Heidi Mendoza, Cory Ramos, Inap and Gloria. He will probably continue to thrive under Stones. And we worry that we might have a president who is crazy?

We are a country where a candidate openly pays P10 billion each to become president all the while trying to convince the poor he is like them. Indeed, all the while trying to convince the poor that once he becomes president he will not try to be richer but only to be poorer, like them. Indeed whose strange instinct to exactly like that one scene by the inmates of Muntinlupa, minus the black lottery, but which incites authorities to see likely to erase as it is reserved only for poor thieves and not rich ones. And we worry that we might have a president who is crazy?

We are a country where the people who are tasked to conduct elections do not know the difference between votes and lawyers, or more worrisomely who really do but prefer lawyers to votes. And we worry that we might have a president who is crazy?

We are a country where the sitting, or ghosted to her seat, President is someone who has served **at least seated presidents. We are a country** where a sitting, or ghosted-to-her seat President, wants to remain sitting or ghosted to her seat. We are a country, or we'll, it is other countries in fact, who want to give out sitting, or ghosted-to-her seat, President an award for environmental conservation (the United States) for making everything toxic in that country, and an award for spreading Spanish culture to the country (Spain), particularly the virtue of dolicadura. And we worry that we might have a president who is crazy?

We are a country where the bishops say it's all right for a presidential candidate to cheat because everyone cheats anyway. We are a country where mothers take care of the children of other nationals so that they can take care of their families but end up having wayward children and even wayward husbands by their absence. We are a country where a couple of presidents ago, in the middle of a coup d'etat while the fights of the bosses in Ayala Alabang are dark because their servants are abroad, did we worry that we might have a president who is crazy?

I do know, which was what assured me that it was the others who were crazy, having had the balls to run the hell on the idea of running for president. I do know, which was what assured me that his family wasn't crazy, that his sisters tried to dissuade him from running for president. I do know, which was what assured me that it was the others who were crazy, having had, being, sire to one, that Noynoy was conscious in every sense of the word, sentience to me because you have to be crazy to want to be president of this country, and similarly crazy to want to be president of this country after Gloria.

Some conclusions are better than others.

I don't know about you, but those days I can be found singing like a yodi star Billy Joel's "You May Be Right," justly inkily the just that point.

"You may be right/I may be crazy/But it may just be a lunatic you're looking for. ..."

Citizen's army for Gibo

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cassayan

AT THIS STAGE, IT'S HARD TO SEE HOW the Lakas-Kampi problem would resolve itself. There are unchallenged talks of defections to other parties as well as political realignments. But the hostility of citizen volunteers of Lakas candidate Gibo Teodoro are not taking to some politicians' decision to jump to other parties (such as Jose Salonga, Dragon Magsaysay and Ronjell Gonzales Jr.) without some counter action. Those volunteers have become unwilling to leave the destiny and fate of this country to the politicians, especially the unprincipled ones whose departure from the party they welcome. A (dis)solution that emerged as the Lakas ranks are ravaged by (dis) loyalty is that volunteers will rather be citizen-based Lakas-Kampi party than to prop up Gibo. In various parts of the country, citizens have been moving, spending their own time, energy and resources, and organizing rallies for Gibo.

Earlier this week, hundreds and feeds drew crowds for Gibo rallies in three sessions in Western Visayas. In Iloilo City, the mayor was virtually forced by his constituents to declare support for Gibo. Cayetano (Sr.) Oro, Bataan and Pampanga rallies saw citizens power at work for their candidate. A Lakas leader opined that this is reminiscent of the campaign of Ramon Magsaysay. It bore something like the "people power" spirit. Even the last three weeks whether this phenomenon can be sustained.

* * *

Because of all the talks about the state of Senator Aquino's psychiatric health, the double whammy the Supreme Court delivered against him was barely noticed. Aquino has doubted the Senate committee on local government since the start of his run for the 2007 senatorial bets always been a member of whichever is the ruling majority, be it the Villar or Enrile Senate presidency. Your congressional redistricting bills landed in his committee, affecting Malolos City and Camarines Sur. Both bills were debated in committee and plenary on and off for about a year and a half, the longest-running local bills in the Senate.

Aquino supported the Malolos bill and persuaded the Senate to pass it, although the city only had a 237,000 population, short of the constitutional requirement of 250,000 for cities. But he opposed the Camarines Sur bill, authored by Rep. Luis Villafuerte in the House, and ardently opposed it here. The previous Arroyo Senate gave me refused to sponsor the measure despite the 5-1 vote of his committee, the Senate leadership persuaded him to yield the sponsorship to another senator, as he could not attack and oppose the measure on the floor, which he did.

* * *

In the end the Senate voted 12-2 in favor of the Villafuerte bill. The nine CBAs for Senate also voted for the bill on Sept. 29, 2009, 20 days after Aquino's official announcement of his presidential candidacy. Dismissed, he went to the Supreme Court and filed a case with limited actual petition, or to declare the Camarines Sur bill unconstitutional. Earlier, however, Malolos residents had also petitioned the SC to void the Malolos bill which Senators had supported, sponsored and shepherded to constitutionality.

Stopping was at same stage in the SC in both cases. The Court declared his Malolos bill unconstitutional and the Camarines Sur bill which he opposed, constitutional by a vote of 9-5. The Camarines Sur constituency has a population of 1,176,000 population which became over a share of the requisite 250,000. The SC, however, said the minimum population required refers only to cities like Malolos and not provinces like Camarines Sur, however not by all levels. The Court voted unanimously for the Camarines bill, including the LDs there. His Senate committee approved it 8-1. Its plenary passed it 13-2 and the SC ruled by a vote of 9-5 declaring the bill constitutional. A double whammy indeed.

* * *

Aquino's spokesperson, Edwin Lacierda, has opined, in answer to MP presidential foe Manny Villar's challenge that Noynoy and he take the presidential test together, that he cannot be compelled to take it since there is no requirement in the Constitution that a candidate for president must be of good physical or mental health. He may be right on that score, but the fact is that when a candidate becomes presidents, the seats of his or her health becomes a matter of public concern. Hence, by logic, we ought to be concerned about the state of health of the presidential candidates.

Section 11 (1 & 2), Article VII of the Constitution, titled the "Executive Department," says that once a person is elected president he must be "able to discharge the powers and duties of the office." And if he is unable to do so, the vice president shall become the acting president. The collective action and decisions of the Cabinet and of both Houses of Congress can affect this change. The Charter also says that "in case of removal, death or disability of both the president and vice president, or both his physical and mental inability to the point he shall be informed of the state of his health."

In short, if the president ceases to be sane or sound mentally, that is a matter of serious national concern. Hence, the ability of the Cabinet and both Houses will be needed. That national concern ought to start with the help of the candidates.

* * *

I'm sorry if I upset GMA Network star Mike Enriquez by citing in last Tuesday's column how he and Ms/News Anne Troy Lopez have noted Noynoy's "tendency to fly off at the slightest cold or sneeze because of his allergies." I wrote that **Mike serves** "Interpret was broad saying, in reaction to my column, that his network prohibits him from making such criticism. I'm sure that's the case, but it's also a fact that a month ago he was heard over ANC during the interview of the senator, as noting how his guest was furiously snacking away. Newbies supposed that he just dressed when in front of media, as which Enriquez noted. "Here the king watches this. What more if you're in front of the Malacañang bank?"

'Butanding!'

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Cerize P. Dayo

"WHEN I SAY JUMP," OUR SMILING BUTANDING instructor Officer (BO) named Boyo said to the five of us, "you jump into the water. Do not hesitate. Please everything and jump. And when I say look down, look down." He promised no one was kidnap of beast and that we believed we were in safe hands.

Our boat was several kilometers from the shore and our were sailing on deep waters. It was a great morning. The April sun was ablaze, the water was very calm, with very a ripple or wave. Azure sky.

With no in the boat were we, BO, a boatman and a butanding spotter. Gem, Abba, Les, Sandra and I put on our life jackets, snorkel gear and flippers (all installed) and waited for the spotter to make a sighting. Our boat moved about while our spotter scanned the waters for butanding. Others boats in the distance were doing the same.

Please, God, I prayed, show us these awesome creatures of the deep.

Then the spotter signaled for us to get ready. We hovered our goggles and bit the mouth mouthpiece. We all sat side by side on the bamboo bridge on the side of the boat, eager and excited. The boat man turned off the engine and suddenly it was silent. Only the sound of the waves splashing on the boat.

"Jump!" our BO hollered and, without hesitation, we all jumped with him into the sea, feet first. It was like a leap of faith. "Relax!" he said, after our heads popped out of the water. "Relax and look down." We all dipped our heads into the water and gazed into the deep.

There it was, a couple of meters below me, a butanding waiting to be seen. I was beholding a huge creature that I only see in books and documentaries in wide-back. It didn't splash or struggle, it was just there. It was a sight to behold. And then it was gone.

We had several sightings and jumps. See the last one I decided to stay on the boat and view from a distance the butanding gliding near the surface. I saw it as a dark silhouette on a background of blue. And then it lowered itself and vanished beneath my sight.

I don't want to say more about my personal experience. You have to experience it for yourself. I was told that some are turned to tears. It's like seeing Mayon Volcano or the Grand Canyon for the first time, except that the butanding does not stay fixed before our eyes, it decides when it comes near.

The presence of whale sharks (Rhincodon typus) in Donsol is not a modern day phenomenon. The locals had known about them for more than 100 years but it was only in the 1990s that they became more conscious that these sharks were harmless and not humans like their ferocious counterparts. The butanding are the world's biggest fish and could grow up to more than 13 meters. Donsol is now known as the world's "whale shark Capital." Time magazine called the butanding experience the "best-kept encounter in Asia."

For so long the butanding were only fished for their meat. They were not considered an important resource with great ecological significance and eco-tourism potential. Or that their preservation could promote environmental balance.

According to our tourist guide, Jhaps (Jumped in 1998 when a professional driver fled by Ramon Magsaysay International Center for Environmental Studies). The driver proved that the whale sharks were docile and fed only on krill and other small creatures. Donsol is a rich feeding ground for these huge sharks. After all, "discovery" was thing led to another and the rest is history.

Interaction with the butanding is strictly regulated by the Department of Tourism, The World Wildlife Fund provides guidelines which include limited number of interaction (six to a boat), no scuba diving, three-meter distance, no touching, no handling by boats of swimmers. The Butanding Interaction Office gives briefings before going.

But despite the regulations, the butanding have had days, such as when one gets hit by a boat propeller, or shot for commercial reasons. It is wonder that they have not moved many somewhere else to Donsol, but continue to return every year, with each season from February to May. This year, the butanding festival is from April 29 to May 5.

And the thrillers included in our Donsol eco-tourism adventure. Upon our return to the mainland, we had a celebration dinner at Oceanview Restaurant. It should be a million days brightened up the day. I had not seen the beauties that way in a long, long time. The boatmen used flashlights to guide our way in a place downstream where we could find restaurants with lighted up signs. Before getting in the business for some time, my eyes turned to the town that were almost and pulsating. To my awe, the fireflies became a symphony of lights synchronized in rhythm.

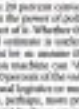
Our weekend trip was not all about whale sharks. Our caravan stopped for meals, rest and sights. We rested at the Quezon Memorial Park, had photo shoots in Albay's Cagsawa ruins with Mayon Volcano as backdrop, visited Daraga's Misericordia Church and had lunch at Legazpi City's Washington Complex known for wakeboarding.

And we have's sharing with you our lessons summer adventure, with thanks to the Inscomm's Windows Walk and Jessica Soho's reporters, drivers, photographers, and especially Inscomm supervisors Arlene Arboleda and Rosanna Bellotindos from Bataan who were on top of the trip and drove like pros. Photos are featured on their Facebook accounts. Thanks for providing the windy rains, SUVs, pick-up, the resorts, the tourism council and people of Donsol, Sorsogon, and all those who helped make this April incredible memorable.

It was a whole of an outing for 66 of us. A great time was had by all.

Send feedback to senagi@gmail.com or www.facebook.com

Home stretch



THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

THE POINT OF DECISION IS APPROACHING for individuals as well as the country. By all accounts, a larger percentage of the voting population has made up its mind compared to previous elections, but there remains both enough undecided voters and already-committed (but not decided) supporters to make the situation volatile still.

At the heart of the choices that voters and candidates have to make, is whether they will throw their lot with the veterans of the Macoy martial law machine, or gamble on reinvigorating the anti-Marcos coalition. Both, in a sense, are on their second and even third generations and with some interesting permutations. The most interesting one being President Macapagal-Arroyo, as she seeks to build the balance of power not just going into election day but beyond.

Undecided voters, for one, are the deadline for making their choices coming up late, and as the political campaign reaches its crescendo, the mood and fury of the contest can lead even the committed to switch sides. Political candidates in the local races are also looking at firming up their affiliations, with the President's patronage having held back some from switching sides until they can be sure of the outcome of the national contest. Local candidates have to keep an eye on what they think will be the odds of being on the right—or wrong—side in terms of the national races, and voters' opinions on their choices as province.

Whether national or local, logistics matters. It's interesting that in the case of the two main parties of political dynasties at the ground, just focused the conventional wisdom that machinery can deliver 30 percent of the votes, though this is bad mood, or hampered (depending on where you stand), by 60 percent of the voters being made up by guilty, but the way how you made, and the traditionally delivering on election day can actually be a problem if delivered to the losing side. An additional issue is the Comelec outsourcing the possibility that up to 20 percent of the voting may have to do with only dumping the results, so that in the end, there was a step in the Arroyo administration and a loss for the opposition, only when those more subtle strategies failed did the President send in an emergency response team that was used side—rigged on by a Fidel; President—that it ended up exposed a martial law.

It'd be well to remember that nationwide the President's role in responding to the ensuing crisis was a simple challenge purely like some in its combination of exuberance and truth. The choice she offered was a simple one: Pill you risk entering into unknown territory, economically and politically speaking, or help maintain the status quo? Her success in actually representing legitimacy? The risks were graphically represented by the armed might of the state being mobilized—and energetically exercised—to ensure that every upper family's peace public opinion stood insurgent against the President would fail to achieve its objectives. Some of the messages that she was one administration that was willing to spill blood, if necessary.

But underlying these scenarios, the strategy remains as well. As even as organized political groups, whether national or local, always must have its get-votes in the get-out-the-vote and ensure the votes are counted as actually cast, the problem of the counting and the various scenarios raised by these problems complicate the decisions they have to make about who to support and to select among, informally speaking, they are prepared to mobilize their supporters—or have been.

This is where the core of public opinion comes with, and can potentially neutralize, the years of law or whatever controlled system the administration is trying to keep under its thumb. An election is a referendum that hinges on a single question: Is the country better off than it was before? Each voter has a sense of where the country stands on this question. Not that the actual result is a loose conclusion, but rather, the possible outcomes, everybody knows, are limited and are within

Choosing a leader

I WILL BE A FIRST-TIME VOTER IN MAY. A PROFESSIONAL and 26 years old, I am embarrassed to admit that I have never participated in any national or local elections. I am not proud of this fact. Schooled in the country's "premiere" university, thanks to the Filipino people who financed my education, and I know I owe it to my country to help in choosing its leaders.

There is no excuse for this, other than the fact that I never registered as a voter in

at last year. My excuse? Nothing. Again, something I am not proud of.

The only reason I've wondered more than ten, and particularly on the day I found myself dashing inside the Comelec office of my town. The lady issuing the voter registration forms seemed surprised when I told her it was the first time I would be voting, and I could tell she was trying hard not to ask why. Even after filling out the form, I still hadn't figured out the answer to that question myself. The thing is (and this many seems childish, if not ridiculous), I felt happy and excited and patriotic after that visit, as if I had done something wonderful to promote a cause bigger than myself.

It was only when the realization over the whole national elections started to hit finally realize why I felt happy and proud that day (which also probably explains why I decided out of the blue to finally register as a voter). I was part of the masses who marched to Edsa to end their president Joseph Estrada in only down. And I am part of this generation's youth (I'd like to think that my age still puts me in this category) who witnessed the rise of President Arroyo in power, still a part of the generation that has seen how power can be used (and abused). I am a member of the generation's youth who felt disgusted and outraged with the words "I am sorry" in reference to the election rigging in Mindanao, a sin admitted but never shown marked with arrogance and an even greater determination to stay in power. I am one of those who believe that it is time for someone else to take over the reins of government.

This is the opportunity, and I want to be part of it, no matter how inconvenient the process may seem to be.

During those past months, I've debated (and I'm still debating) over whom I should vote. It is both an exhausting and enlightening journey of introspection. And because it is my first time to vote, I am interested to know how people think and decide on these things as much as I am interested to know something about the candidates. I am not looking for perfection in any one person. It is about how intelligent a candidate is and the degrees he received, including the schools he went to? It is about how capable (or incapable) he is of commanding congress? Is it about his wealth and how he can use a position in public office to inflate that wealth? Should it be about his political party and how much he is allowed to influence his presidency? Should I consider his lineage and the legacy his family left to the nation? Or should my choice just revolve around the candidate's sincerity, his record of service, and his integrity without regard for his knowledge of public affairs or even his professional ties to certain groups?

I could go on and on and on, and after discussions with friends, I am surprised to know that we share the very same thoughts and questions. A great wealth is a guarantee that one will no longer succumb to corruption and greed? Will intelligence and a sharp mind only be used to cover up for illegal deals that never see one but himself? Is a person a good leader just because he/she left a capable legacy?

The bottom line question is this: When among those candidates can make my life a little better than before? Because for most Filipinos, it is always about the candidates who can bring food to their table, the candidates who can appease their child's education, the candidates who can pay for their medical bills, the candidates who can provide jobs for their heads.

I may not have taken part in selecting our leaders before, but I have seen the kind of leaders we chose in the past. We don't choose role models, we choose those who can be our bumpers. We don't choose those who can lead, we choose those who can launch the biggest motorcades during the campaign. We don't choose those who can lead us, we choose those who we want to do, we choose those who we popular.

And yes, I'd like to think that we have learned our lesson. The past has shown us the importance of choosing wisely. So, no matter how cynical we are about our nation's politics, and no matter how much we are convinced that nothing will change because they all are bound to end up stealing from us, I'd like to believe that we have learned our lesson. Those who will lessons shouldn't be running for office in the first place. This is a good first step and it shows that we are an educated people when it comes to choosing our leaders.

Someone asked me if I would vote for a candidate who is good but has no chance of winning because he is not as popular as the others. My answer is a big "no." Because we are saying that with all the limitations and barriers of a first time voter—elections for me are more than just helping someone win; it is about making a statement and taking a stand. It is more than just choosing a president. It is about choosing a leader—and we should never forget that these are two different things.

This is the time and I want to be part of it.

Clarisse Espiritu Alba, 26, juggles her master's studies and her work at the University of the Philippines in Los Baños. She hopes to be a medical school by the time she votes again in the next national elections.

YOUNG BLOOD

Clarisse Espiritu Alba

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? Be welcome contributions from the twenty-something and below. —Ed.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in, if employed, the past time you're holding and the company you work with. Unpublished contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

THEY SAID

Poor and honest

"We are very proud of her. We sense from a past family but despite that, she did not take advantage of her position. And that indeed in these times. She always told her to work hard to advance in life. It's the only way."

—Jovelyn Alberto, cousin of former Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin

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Bureaucrat-capitalist Villar not from ranks of dirt poor

LETTERS

IT WAS ALMOST LIKE HEARING YEL the talking token Ape Abraxas, formerly of Smithsonian, when I saw the May 10 election would symbolize a "clash of classes"—Benigno Aquino III of the elite, and Manuel Villar of the impoverished. (Inquirer, 4/13/10)

In if the success of a class were a fixed category, and mixed was the two realize in the ideological heterogeneity of the concrete and real. Positive analysis examines from scratch, for instance.)

That Aquino would hamper the oligarchic properties of the feudal class, and Villar would jack up, Fenix-like, the cause of the poor and underprivileged, is the classic condition of "contradictory data itself."

But proofs point to the contrary. Otherwise, the mass mourning over the death of Cory Aquino was misplaced, not worthy of sad faces. She lived like a mainstream, and while the ideological structure of her regime left much to cry, as an illustration, the instinct of hope that she resurrected is something to inflate as she has been able to provide on a grand scale.

Villar is a bureaucrat-capitalist whose corruption has eclipsed the cunnings of Ayeseller's paragon like Aquino. Can he still solidify them consistent with the poor? It's now media within the capitalist-corporate system burgeoned with the view of democracy into "free" license approves of.

Even Jose Rizalo Strait has disassociated himself from the Villar campaign, as if to rationalize the latter's deep-seated sentiment with a party that falsely experiences itself as a united front with the idea of bridging Marcos to the millionaire Ariel Querubin, and the party-list include former Gramps and Leo Echon.

It's as if Villar would enforce the Stalinist Resolutions. Fenix's program of governance, which goes against the ideological construction of Free World capitalism itself.

The investments in the poor as election props is like Joseph Estrada's, whose the unenlightened famous Live education Estrada's tea made them act similar as an articulation of their own affection. It's obvious enough: Suckers are blinds every minute and blinds cape victims on that.

When will the classic Rizalo struggle be done justice by so-called Left "agitprop" that does not see Macoys, in the words of Aquino, as an ongoing problematic?

We must truly fear for the future!

—EDELL E. GARCELLANO
University of the Philippines

Mike denies disparaging words vs Noynoy

THIS REFERS TO NELSON DOMEEL-Commuter's April 13 column titled, "Bagay raquez bilugo pesobi-mine to force." where the main mention of presidential candidate Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino's mental and psychiatric health, stating that "A number of media practitioners, such as Atiko Enriquez of GMA Network and Tony Lopez of ABS-CBN, have noted his tendency to fly off at the slightest criticism from media and his seeming inability to handle stress."

Mr. Enriquez denies making any such comment in his radio, TV programs or in any other medium, forum or occasion.

Mr. Enriquez, as well as all our other listeners and PNOYlite, value a keen and perceptive citizen, so aware of their responsibilities as media practitioners. As such, they are eminently and deliberately astute from making remarks that would prejudice them to be biased for or against any candidate. That is a MUST rule they observe in the Usok News and Public Affairs menu: "Walang Kinikilingan, Walang Pinapanigan, Walang Tinatakpan."

—JOSE HUTCH S. RAQUEL, VP—
Corporate Communications, GMA-7

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Why Conrad de Quiros is highly esteemed

WHEN I READ THE INQUIRER THE FIRST thing I do is open the "Opinion" page. There are several columnists whose articles I read. I mean admit that Conrado de Quiros is first in my list.

My curiosity was renewed when he mentioned that he was one of those hard-hitting critics of Cory Aquino's administration. Why he must hold her in great admiration is not a matter I would speak or find out. But that sparked my desire to read his columns and possibly learn more about him as a columnist, though I doubt if I could ever attain even 25 percent of my goal.

Anyway, I am now ready to reading his columns. I find his writing vivid, though sometimes confusing. He disarms issues with impressive using figures of speech which make us better understand what he is driving at. He is fearless, frank and furious. I relate his subjects he looks, deeper, and he sounds few, the stories he many people to see.

I am moved to write this because I want all lovers, fearless and impartial writers to know how highly De Quiros is esteemed. His valuable comments be published. With his pen, he helps to shape our times. He does not mince words to raise radical, serious issues. Instead, he affirms our principles and strengthens our resolve to pursue nobler things in life—things that uplift, empower and give purpose and meaning.

King David (one of the greatest kings of Israel) asked one from God, while he was king: "May integrity and uprightness preserve me, because my hope is in you." (1 Kings 6:6) Integrity and uprightness are personal virtues that, as David asked from God, can help us to be able to live a life of moral rectitude, even as God is good and upright.

Most of our government leaders are running in circles or find solutions to our various problems—poverty, disease, etc.—just one. They cannot find the answers, because, instead of heeding the country to prospering, they arouse poverty. The poor do not need more super corporate tax representatives nor more laws to govern. (The latter they impose and on the poor but not on the powerful.) The people need leaders who are imbued with integrity and selflessness. Leadership by example is the answer.

May I thank De Quiros for enacting his thoughts on through his columns.

Mabuhay to De Quiros and to all journalists who are true to their mission! They free our spirits from the shackles of ignorance and intolerance!

—EDGARDO FRANCO RODRIGUEZ,
retired teacher, mother
and doting grandmother,
#1128 Jose Fabre St., Cavite Heights,
Tanza, Pateros-pio City

Computer breakdown holding back pension?

ANICETA D. DELFIN, HONORABLE DISABLED OF retired government employee, was 76-fifty, has not received, since July 2009, the survivorship pension due her from the Government Service Insurance System. Being sickly, Mr. Delfin can't go to the GSIS Satellite Office in Camarines Norte to reactivate her status as a pensioner. Her daughter Virginia took the last batch several follow-ups with the GSIS Satellite Office, only to be told each time that the computer in the office was not working. In a result Delfin only receives on the 15,000 monthly old-age pension from the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office, which is not even enough to buy the maintenance medicines prescribed by doctors. What is also among that her pension with the GSIS Satellite Office to give attention by GSIS Manila.

Can't the GSIS serve the pensioners better? If, indeed, the GSIS is efficiently managed, why do pensioners complain of not receiving their pensions regularly and promptly. After all, they are only getting back what they had saved in the form of retirement premiums pensions while they were in the government service for years?

And why do the GSIS deputy screening operators of the Claveresa branch on 13th month pay that they were receiving before?

—DOROTEO D. SUTIZA,
past commander,
Veterans Federation of the Philippines,
Camarines Norte Veterans Center Region 5,
East South-Health Area Line Post,
Daet, Camarines Norte 4600

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Across the NATION

Facebook becomes battleground for candidates in Baguio City

By Frank Cimatu
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY – FILIPINO POLITICIANS cannot duplicate the success of US President Barack Obama in using Facebook and other social media in networking and raising funds for their campaign.

But do not tell that to candidates in Baguio.

Almost all have Facebook accounts and their posts and comments dominate the political blogosphere here.

Even old timers, like former Mayors Braulio Yaranon and Bernardo Vergara, both running for representative, have their Facebook accounts, carrying links to their video footage on YouTube.

With about 38,000 Facebook accounts originating in the city, the social networking site has become a virtual battleground for the candidates.

Only 60 of the 78 candidates for mayor, vice mayor, representative and councilor do not have a Facebook account or page, informal survey showed.

One of the unbelievers is former Mayor Ramon Labo, who said most of the accounts were being managed not by the politicians themselves but by their handlers.

But mayor Glaiberto

Leander Siegel, a candidate for representative, said: "I have an FB account months before. I believe FB campaigning is effective. Late at night after the actual campaigning, I answer my friends' queries about me and issues in Baguio. I find it very intimate."

Jose Oberit, a candidate for councilor, said he was able to connect with old friends and their families not only in Baguio but all over the world.

"They tell their relatives back in Baguio to vote for me," he said.

Sonia Duran, another candidate for councilor, said "Facebooking" is very personal. "I get to talk not only to my friends here but those abroad. We get to talk about issues and political gossip as well," she said.

Baguio-born Adnan Arnaldo, a music critic in Seattle, said local politics would benefit more from online social networking.

"If it's merely used as a popularity indicator, it would really mean nothing," he said.

Rights groups say Army running amuck

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—The military and the police in Central Luzon have "run amuck," using every means to destroy evidence as they work to end insurgency by June 30, human rights advocates said here on Wednesday.

"They're running amuck to beat the deadline set by President Benigno Aquino," said Nonoy Bocqui, chair of the Bikolnon para sa Pandaraoang Demokrasya (BPD) in the region.

Civilians, more than armed combatants, suffered in the anti-insurgency campaign, according to Mae de Dios, chair of the Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (Philra).

In a report to the Commission on Human Rights (CHR), the AFP recorded 52 various human rights cases of extrajudicial killings, attempted killings, five cases of harassment, three abductions and enforced disappearances, illegal search and arrests, and forced labor activities in Pampanga, Bataan and Zambales.

Lawyer Antonio Bejasa, chair of the regional CHR, said the AFP's report is being validated while some of the cases have been investigated.

AFP doubts data

Lt. Gen. Ricardo David, chief of the military's Northern Luzon Command, expressed doubt on BPD's data.

"I have spoken to all commanders in my area and it was our commitment to always observe human rights. Our legitimate engagements or encounters should not be considered violations," David told the Inquirer.

Brig. Gen. Jose Mabanglo, head of Army units in the three provinces, said the "Left have been devastated because of recent government accomplishments." "These allegations are meant to divert and distract public perception," he said.

Chief Supt. Sotero Cardeo, chief of the Central Luzon police, did not reply when sought for comment.

Bocqui said perpetrators have become bolder, doing the abductions "in broad daylight or late into the night," mostly in the homes of victims and in the presence of their relatives.

Pattern of denial

She said police have "failed to do due diligence" by not recording the cases, investigating them or bringing the violators behind bars.

Army units assigned to the three provinces have resorted to a "pattern of denial," she said.

"Only the CHR has been doing the investigation," she added.

De Dios said the practice of burning bodies or stealing them when there are need to evidence was common. He cited the cases of Alberto Ocampo and Jose Gerardo of Bataan. A prisoner case about 18 policemen execute the two men in April last year, he said.

On May 13, two months before the CHR-approved exhumation, the bodies were stolen, he said.

Because laws were not upheld, human rights violations have increasingly become "concerns of civilian authority," he said.

"We're no different from the military junta of Burma," he said. Dimitrie Ortejas, Inquirer Central Luzon

THE LOVELY Pinatubo lies on its side in a ravine after its driver lost control of the wheels, sending the vehicle falling 25 meters in Barangay Bagumbayan in Tarlac, Kalinga. EDUARDO CASTRO/PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY/CENTRAL LUZON

Overloaded bus plunges into ravine; 8 people dead

TARLAC, KALINGA—An overloaded mini-bus plunged into a ravine while negotiating a curve along the highway in Barangay Bagumbayan here on Tuesday, killing eight people and injuring 13 others, police and Army reports said.

The Tabuk-bound Lovely Mae bus, which came from Sinibaldo, Quirino in Mt. Province, was approaching the Dupang Bridge when its driver, Joseph Malayes, lost control of the vehicle, causing the bus to fall into a 25-meter deep ravine, said Capt. Julio Rafael, spokesperson of the Army's 54th Infantry Battalion.

Reports said the bus' 40 seats were filled and more passengers were packed in its cool.

Killed were Pfc. Ricardo Martinez of the 54th IB, Christopher Cawis, Jeanne Arena, Jojo Bentayo, Chilyn Hokyas, Boy Abecilla, Francis Sheling and Hanalyn Castillon.

Forty other passengers were taken to the Kalinga Provincial Hospital. Filamor Visaya and Delmar Carvihe, Inquirer Northern Luzon

MILF suspends top leader Kabalu for meeting with candidates

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—THE Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) has suspended one of its top officials for violating the rebel group's policy of non-involvement in the elections.

The MILF, in an announcement posted on its website, said it suspended Ali Kabalu, MILF civil-military affairs chief, for six months for "arrogating unto himself powers that do not fall within his authority."

The order to suspend Kabalu, one of the most known figures in the MILF ranks signed by Sammy Al-Mansoor, chief of the Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces (BIAF) and took effect April 12, said the MILF website.

Kabalu made himself scarce and could not be reached for comment.

The MILF said its central committee decided to suspend Kabalu after his meeting with Eddie Villanueva, a Christian president and standard-bearer of the Bangon Pilipinas party, and Villanueva's running mate, Herbert Yang.

Kabalu signed a statement for peace with Bangon Pilipinas during the meeting.

What Kabalu did, the MILF website said, "seriously violated the policy of the MILF on its leaders not to take part in the electoral process of the Philippine government."

"More seriously, you have already breached the official position of the MILF not to subscribe to the Philippine Constitution ...," said the MILF suspension order.

MILF said its leadership has adopted a hands-off policy in the elections, characterizing it as "divisive, partisan and corrupting."

The MILF said the covenant that Kabalu signed with Bangon Pilipinas expresses support for autonomy "within the framework of the Constitution."

The MILF also said aside from Villanueva and Yang, Kabalu also had meetings with North Cotabato Vice Gov. Emmylou Piñol and senatorial candidate Ferdinand Marcos Jr. "and reportedly the wife of presidential candidate Manny Villar." Ryan B. Rosauro, Inquirer Mindanao

Irrigation first to go as Angat water woes worsen

NORZAGARAY, BULACAN—Operators of the Angat Dam on Wednesday stopped feeding irrigation water to Bulacan and Pampanga farms to maximize the daily potable water supply of Metro Manila.

The only way to reverse that is when another typhoon with the intensity of last year's flood-spawning "Ondoy" hits the Angat area, said Rodolfo Gerardo, general manager of the Angat Hydroelectric Power Corp.

He said 97 percent of Metro Manila's daily water requirement is supplied by the dam.

The dam's water elevation dropped to 179.44 meters above sea level (masl) on Wednesday, which was only a meter below the facility's critical level of 180 masl.

Gerardo said he received assurances from the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) to stop the irrigation supply for almost 27,000 hectares of farms in 17 Bulacan and four Pampanga towns.

Rains that fell in the Angat Dam in Barangay San Lorenzo here on Tuesday only moistened the soil, Gerardo said.

He said the dam needs typhoons to fill its reservoir. "What we need are two storms with the intensity of last year's Tropical Depression 'Ondoy,'" he said.

He said the Bureau of Soils conducted cloud-seeding operations around Aurora and in the vicinity of Angat Dam on Tuesday.

At least 25,000 farmers would lose water for irrigation.

Gloria Castillo, provincial agriculture officer, said she needs to assess the impact of an irrigation supply shutdown as the drought has damaged 1,000 hectares of farms in Bulacan.

She said farmers have informed her of other resources like canals and creeks rehab provide alternative irrigation water.

Gerardo said irrigation waters may not be restored for two months, although authorities anticipate rains by June.

During a forum at SM Mall-lac on Tuesday, experts urged households to collect rainwater. They said water crisis is "just a matter of time."

On Monday, Greenpeace Philippines set up camp at the Angat Dam to provide water situation reports and promote water conservation. Carmela Reyes-Rivera, Inquirer Central Luzon

MEMBERS of the environmental group Greenpeace set up camp at the Angat Dam in Norzagaray, Bulacan, to monitor water level and help promote water conservation. LEONILO MADRIAGA

E-VAT and WATERED-DOWN CHEAPER MEDICINES ACT

ARE NOT PRO-POOR

AS MAR ROXAS CLAIMS

Senator Mar Roxas, you have always **CLAIMED** to be pro-poor with your battle cry of **"Lalaban Tayo"** and image dressing as **"Mr. Palengke"** and **"Mr. Padyak"**.

MAR ROXAS - PRINCIPAL SPONSOR OF E-VAT LAW

Senator Loren Legarda publicly criticized this law.
She foresaw the HUNGER that this law would cause our poor people.

Eighty per cent (80%) of our Filipinos are living below the poverty line. Yet, **YOU ARE ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL SPONSORS OF THE E-VAT Law**. Every Filipino, rich like you, or poor like most Filipinos - pay 12% more for the basic necessities for living. **FOOD, MEDICINES, GASOLINE, TRANSPORTATION, ELECTRICITY** and **WATER** have become expensive because of **YOUR E-VAT LAW!** Ito ay lubusang pampahirap sa mga maralitang Pilipino! How can you claim yourself to be **PRO-POOR?**

MAR ROXAS - PRINCIPAL AUTHOR OF A WATERED-DOWN VERSION OF THE CHEAPER MEDICINES ACT

WHY DID YOU NOT PUSH FOR, AND SPONSOR THE ORIGINAL VERSION?

Senator Loren Legarda opposed your version and she supported the Biron-Suplico Version.

BIRON-SUPLICO VERSION	MAR ROXAS' CHEAPER MEDICINES LAW
1500 essential medicines to be included in the list of discounted medicines	Included only 22 essential medicines
Reduction of price of essential medicines by 80 to 90 per cent	Allowed only a 50 per cent discount on essential medicines

You claim your version to be **"Para sa lahat"**. Ngayon, **LAHAT** ay naghihirap pa rin, dahil sa paglulusaw mo ng **BIRON-SUPLICO** version ng Cheaper Medicines Act! Hindi pa rin abot-kaya ng mga maralita ang bumili ng gamot!

In fact, **Senator Mar Roxas**, you have sponsored laws which have been a continuing and oppressive burden to the poor. With these kind of laws, how can you claim to be **PRO-POOR?**

RONALD A. LUMBAO
National Chairman

PMAP

People's Movement Against Poverty

INQUIRER Southern Luzon

Politics stalls biomass plant project

By Dolly T. Mallari Jr.
Lucena City

FOR GATHERING FARM waste at their coconut plantation in Ilayang Iloko in Quezon's Unisan town, Natalia Enrope and other members of her family earned P600 each for a couple of hours' work.

"My grandchildren were all very happy. They earned their own money for their cell phone loads. They kept on pestering me if they can gather more waste every day," Enrope said.

Unisan Biofuel Corp. (UBC), project proponent of the P1.7-billion biomass power plant in Brgy. Ibabang Iyam, is considering a ton-load of dried coconut fronds, husks, unbrowsed chips and other waste from farmers like Enrope to assure the sustainability of raw materials for the facility.

A dry run on March 12-23 collected more than 400 tons of unsorted waste, which the company bought for 30 centavos a kilo. The stockpile was temporarily located at a 1.6-hectare piece of raw land in Barangay Malaguinlin, site of the proposed plant.

"The raw materials were only gathered in Unisan. There is much, much more in the neighboring towns," said Energumena Suarez, head of UBC's sustainability department.

"We just want to prove to the critics of the project that the plant, once operational, would really provide tremendous benefits to thousands of Similac Peninsula residents," Suarez said.

Biomass is solar energy stored in organic matter, such as trees, crops and other plants. It is considered a renewable energy source because the growth of new plants and trees replenishes supply.

FARMERS gather coconut husks and other farm waste to turn them into cash in Unisan town in Quezon.
INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

False news

The proposed plant, fed by waste coming largely from the coconut industry, is expected to generate 10 megawatts of electricity for several towns to the third district. It will also produce distilled water, coconut sugar, copra and other byproducts.

But because UBC was being initiated by the family of Quezon Rep. Danilo Suarez (Lakas-Kampi-CMD), the project has been bombarded by allegations from the politician's foes that it is a "white elephant" emerging from a "bottom feed" and meant to finance the campaign of candidates from his clan.

After the sun-bog rumors immediately spread that the company would continue to buy farm waste, prompting villagers to gather more to earn extra cash.

"We were forced to buy the additional stocks to compensate the labor of the farmers. Sometimes we have waste to submerge the image of the company," said Mark Ubiña Jalbuna, a UBC staff member.

The stockpile, however, mysteriously caught fire in the middle of the night on June 6th, burning close to P700,000 worth of raw materials into ashes.

"We had planned to sell the stock to coconut coir plants and other firms for their raw materials to recoup portions of our investment. But now, it's gone," Jalbuna said.

Early this year, former Gov. Eddie Rodriguez and lawyer Sonny Pulgar, both political lieutenants of Gov. Rafael Nantes (Liberal Party), initiated the formation of the "Unisan Labas sa Tinaling Sistema sa Bondoc Peninsula" (Unisan as Trading System in Bondoc Peninsula) to spearhead the opposition against the biomass plant.

Suarez's son, former Vice Gov. David Suarez, is seeking a rematch against Nantes in the May 10 elections after losing in a close contest in 2007.

UBC officials say Unisan Mayor Cesar Alejay, a known ally of Nantes, has not yet issued permits for the documentation requirements of the project.

"This useless selfish politicking only serves as a hindrance to the development of the Bondoc Peninsula," Representative Suarez lamented.

Rodriguez, Nantes' Bondoc Peninsula development affairs, had planned to challenge Suarez in the congressional race. Last month, the Commission on Elections (Comelec) disqualified Rodriguez's certificate of candidacy because of a criminal conviction for insurance fraud in the United States.

Investors

In his blog site, Pulgar, Nantes' lawyer, has accused Suarez of lobbying in Malacañang and other government agencies for approval of the biomass plant project. Suarez, he said, was trying to railroad a P1.7-billion loan with the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP).

Both Rodriguez and Pulgar refused to issue statements to the Inquirer.

Suarez does not deny that UBC is owned by his family. "But I'm not one of the company incorporators or one of the investors."

The company has only a 30-percent stake in the project, he explained. The rest will be bankrolled by a syndicate of foreign investors and private financial institutions, he added.

He maintained that as a government official, he was not violating any law and insisted that only the four highest elected officials of the land—President, Vice President, Senate president and Speaker—and their relatives are prohibited from entering into projects with the government or borrowing public funds under Republic Act No. 3019 or the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act.

The lawmaker laughed off allegations that the fund would end up as a "bottom feed."

"Government money will not be involved in this project. The funding will come from private financial institutions and foreign investors. DBP is not involved," Suarez said.

UBC is near to closing its negotiation with Banco de Oro to finance the biomass project, he added.

The company has also been engaged in talks with foreign investors, including a partnership with Philippine National Oil Co. Last year, the Department of Energy gave its go-signal for the Unisan plant.

Electricity

Suarez denied that the funding for the proposed plant would be used for the clan's election campaign.

"We have sufficient cash to finance our campaigns. Besides, the money for the project is not forthcoming because of the senseless and baseless misunderstood maneuvers of my political foes," he said.

After the Unisan plant becomes operational, two more biomass facilities will be put up in Quezon, which have already been secured of foreign funding.

Dipolog Electricity Services, the Quezon Electric Cooperative, which supplies electricity to the Bondoc Peninsula, will no longer have to buy electricity from two independent producers—Team Energy power plant in Pagbilao town and Quezon Power Ltd. in Mauban, which are both coal-fueled.

The proponents maintained that the biomass plant would contribute extensively to coconut production. Instead of cutting coconut trees, the farmers will be enticed to plant more, which, in turn, will boost efforts to protect the watershed areas.

Enrope said more farming families were getting restive over the project's delay. She rallied on all government officials to set aside petty political bickering and helped together in building the biomass energy plant.

REP. DANILO SUAREZ. "This useless selfish politicking only serves as a hindrance to the development of the Bondoc Peninsula."

The proposed plant, fed by waste coming largely from the coconut industry, is expected to generate 10 megawatts of electricity for several towns

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PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

14 April 2010

DOH-FDA ADVISORY
No. 2010-065

Subject: ROTARIX VACCINE

In the interest of public health and safety and in the wake of recent developments and reports from international regulatory bodies, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issues this advisory regarding the use of ROTARIX, a vaccine which is administered to young children as a preventive measure against rotaviruses infection. It has been discovered that a porcine circovirus-1 (PCV-1) is present in the cell bank of the Rotarix vaccine. The manufacturer of the above vaccine initiated extensive experiments and confirmed the said finding.

Other regulatory agencies issued statements that the virus does not pose any public health risk as it does not cause any diseases in humans. Notably, the World Health Organization Global Advisory Committee on Vaccine Safety (WHO-GIACVS) considers that the benefits of vaccination far outweigh any currently known risk associated with the use of ROTARIX given the extensive clinical data supporting the safety of the said vaccine and the benefits of rotavirus vaccination for children.

Relative thereto, the FDA advises the public of its decision that there is no need to withdraw the vaccine from the Philippine market. The FDA will continue to coordinate closely with the manufacturer and evaluate data submitted by the company and other information available from other sources. In the meantime, doctors may continue giving the vaccine to their patients based on their discretion and professional judgment.

NAZARITA T. TACANDONG, RPh, MPA
Acting Director IV

Protecting Verde Islands' biodiversity

By Madonna T. Virola
Lubang Island

THE MUNICIPAL COUNCILS of Looc and Lubang in Occidental Mindoro have approved a joint ordinance establishing marine protected areas (MPAs) in 10 sites of 14,485 hectares around their islands.

The ordinance makes the area the largest marine protected system in the waters Verde Island Passage Marine Biodiversity Corridor (VIPMBC), according to Rina Bonebe, communications coordinator of the Sulu-sea Seascape Project of the Conservation International (CI) Philippines.

"The establishment of these marine protected areas represents a huge investment for the future of the millions of people and the many communities depending on the rich marine resources of the Verde Island Passage," said Romeo Trono, CI country executive director.

"We are proud to have been part of the bold step taken by the people of Looc and Lubang," he added.

'Center of the center'

Experts have recognized the corridor as the "center of the center" of marine shorefish biodiversity in the world. It is composed of the stretch of water surrounded by the provinces of Batangas, Occidental and Oriental Mindoro, Romblon and Marinduque.

The enactment of the ordinance on March 24 was announced to residents and guests during the launching of the Philippine Fish Climate Smart Market Protected Area in the coastal village of Binuran in Lubang on April 7.

Present were Dr. Angel Alcala of CI, scientists, local officials and villagers.

Studies undertaken by the CI showed that the Looc-Lubang area is one of the richest areas with the greatest marine conservation potentials.

Reefs and shallows around the islands were found to have very high concentrations of fish larvae and eggs. This means that protecting the area is important in maintaining biodiversity and sustaining the fishery resources of the entire corridor.

The Looc-Lubang area also boasts of at least three exotic species, seven species of whales and dolphins, eight seagrass species, and a rich variety of commercially important fish species.

It bears the corridor's largest reduction zone (RTZ) at 1,150 ha, where all forms of extraction are banned. The remaining 13,335 ha are designated as fishery reserves, where only certain fishing methods and gears are allowed.

The MPAs are to be jointly managed by Looc and Lubang towns.

"After this establishment, their main concern is the enforcement of policies within and around the MPAs," said Lourdes de Lara, the municipal planning and development coordinator of Looc.

The counterpart in Lubang, Ray Morales, said "the second-class support and understanding of the locals and outside tourists, especially on the technical aspect of the management of the MPAs, are likewise critical."

The MPAs are expected to enhance the islands' tourism potential, since the RTZ is located in front of a stretch of excellent beaches and coral reefs.

MAP shows the marine protected areas off Lubang and Looc town in Occidental Mindoro.

Most wanted on May 10: An education president

From page A1

neighbors, we're not getting better. They're getting much better than us. They're improving at a faster rate."

Last to one of the key advisers of Sen. Benigno Aquino III, the Liberal Party candidate for president in the May 10 elections, his focus on the backlogs of a movement in the Philippines of agrarian reform, or capital, his ideas are reflected in Aquino's education program, regarded as one of the most progressive among the presidential candidates.

Ricel Medina, the Harvard-finance director of the GN Education for All Global Monitoring Report, which examines nationally progress toward universally agreed goals to educate, speaks of "neglect" when asked about Philippine education.

He says that the Philippine government's spending on education is even less than half the national average for sub-Saharan Africa.

Intolerable inequalities

"So far it blaming the Philippines cannot afford to continue the policy of neglecting education and tolerating what are by any official standards intolerable inequalities," Medina says in response to questions emailed by the Inquirer.

"The Philippines currently spends just over 2 percent of national income on education. This compares with almost 4 percent in Indonesia and less than half the national average for sub-Saharan Africa," he says.

"It goes without saying that spending more money on education is not an automatic route to success. But reserving an underperforming education system of resources is not a good starting point for reforms aimed at strengthening quality, equity and equity."

Medina says the slow progress stands in stark contrast to the advances in other areas, including nutrition and child health.

"Education should be at the top of the list of national priorities in the Philippines. Vital issues of social justice are at stake. The Philippine Constitution holds out the promise of a decent quality education as a birthright of citizenship," he says.

Violation of basic rights

"Denying millions of kids an opportunity to realize their potential because they were born to poor parents is not just a violation of their basic rights, it is also a presumption for slow economic growth, weak employment creation, and social dislocation," Medina says.

The Arroyo administration claims that it has made progress, pointing to increased participation rates of elementary students and improved results in national achievement tests (NAT).

The total mean percentage score in the NAT has improved, says the Department of Education, from 54.66 percent in school year 2003 to 2004 to 58.96 percent in 2006-2007, 61.81 percent in 2007-2008, and 65.56 percent in 2008-2009.

For school years 2005-2006 to 2008-2009, Math improved from 53.66 percent to 67.31 percent; English, 54.08 percent to 61.81 percent; Science, 46.77 percent to 58.86 percent; Filipino, 60.69 percent to 71.09 percent; and Makabayan, 58.12 percent to 67.84 percent.

Testing review

However, Liz says some members of the academic community want to review the exams.

"There's a group in UP (University of the Philippines) that had a proposal to evaluate the testing instruments to determine if the test was the same every year or more or less consistent, plenary, and testing," he says.

"There are those who say, from what they see, that the test is the same every year—we don't know that for sure but there are speculations. Here, if you don't change the test every year, as a teacher or as a school, you can start training students how to answer the test. You can just train the kids and it gets better and better."

The participation rate—the ratio between the enrollment in the school age range to the total population of that age range—for elementary had gone down from 87.11 percent in 2004-2005 to 85.11 percent in 2008-2009.

For high school, it went up from 59.87 percent in 2004-2005 to 60.74 percent in 2008-2009. This meant that 40 percent of students who should be in high school were not enrolled.

Is dropout rate dropping?

The dropout rate for elementary slightly improved from 6.98 percent in 2004-2005 to 6.60 percent in 2008-2009. For high school, it also slightly went down from 7.09 percent to 7.45 percent.

This refers to students who leave school during the school year as well as those who complete the grade/year level but fail to enrol in the next grade/year level the following year.

The completion rate, or the percentage of first year entrants in a level of education who complete the level in accordance with the required number of years of study, also improved in elementary from 69.06 percent in 2004-2005 to 73.29 percent in 2008-2009.

For high school, it went up slightly from 57.38 percent to 58.24 percent. Nevertheless, these completion rates meant that for every 100 students that entered elementary and high school, almost 25 did not finish their studies.

"Part of the dropout rates having screwed? We don't know because based on the graduation rates, it does not appear to be changing. One year it's up a little bit; the next year it's down a little bit," Liz says. "So at the end of the day, we're not in sure that things are getting progressively better."

Completion rate

Liz says that the completion rate of the Philippines matches parable with that of Taiwan and Korea back in the 1950s but this was no longer the case. "Today, Korea and Taiwan have almost universal completion for high school. So, they've really leapfrogged us. We're not moving. That's a problem."

This apparent stagnation has led Medina to say that the 1991 congressional commission finding that the quality of education in country was declining still rings true almost 20 years later.

"That would appear to be a fair assessment," he says.

"The Philippines has still not achieved universal primary education, in fact, countries such as Cambodia and Tanzania have now overtaken the Philippines in terms of net enrollment. In 2007, over-of-school members broke through the 1 million mark," he says.

"Moreover, around one-quarter of the children entering school drop out before Grade 5. The proportion of children reaching Grade 5 has barely changed in the past decade. Dismal rates in secondary education are also low, with 40 percent of the relevant age group being out of school."

RP ranked 41st

Medina says that in the 2003 TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) achievement, the Philippines ranked 41 out of 45 countries. He says the Philippines was below Indonesia and Thailand for Grade 8 or secondary level; for Grade 4, the Philippines ranked 23 out of 25 countries.

Liz says that education reformers have noticed that the problem of dismal learning achievement in high school begins after Grade 3.

"The reason why we have poor achievement at the high school level is when kids come off Grade 3, they're not still able to read. And if you can't read at Grade 3, everything becomes remedial after that," he says.

"And the remedial becomes worse and worse because if you spend half your year reviewing the previous year, you will only have half of the year left. The following year, you are already half way behind. So, every year, it gets worse and worse."

Quality of teachers

Medina says that the Philippines should also improve the training of its teachers while they are still in school.

"Of central importance is the poor quality of teaching. Inbred practices in teacher training institutions of sufficiently qualified teachers and to a failure to train, support and motivate teachers. The passing rate for the licensure exam for new teachers has also declined," he says.

Medina says that several regions in the Philippine education have "highlighted serious concerns over the quality of education, levels of learning achievement, access to schools, and reaching to an appropriate language."

He also points out that "other problems are centred on high levels of poverty and inequality."

"Failure to tackle the underlying causes of the stark social disparities evident in the system (1) is holding back progress in education, with disappointing consequences for economic growth, poverty reduction and progress in health," he says.

Medina notes that children from the richest 20 percent of households are on average of 13 years in education compared to 6 years for the poorest 20 percent.

"The gap reflects the deep rush in the education system built by poverty," he says. "Many children from poor households do not even afford fees, because poverty drives children into child labor, or because the education on offer through the public system is of such poor quality as to prompt parents to withdraw their children from school."

He also notes the "marked inequalities across regions" with lower than 1 percent of 17-22 year olds in the National Capital Region having less than 4 years in school while this number rises to 6 percent for the Visayas and Davao.

Highest education poverty

The regions in the country with the highest "education poverty" (or the percentage of those aged 17-22 years old with less than 4 years of education) are the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (34.06 percent), the Cordillera Region (6.10-63 percent), Davao (9.20 percent), Mimaropa (9.08 percent), and Central Visayas (8.91 percent), according to Unesco.

"The public education system in the Philippines is clearly in need of increased investments, measures to strengthen quality, and a national strategy to reduce inequalities," Medina says.

"Achieving greater equity in education will require a joined-up strategy with wider poverty reduction initiatives aimed at supporting livelihoods in remote regions, combating child labor, and addressing the problems faced by indigenous groups."

Lessons from Brazil

Medina says that lessons could be drawn from other countries that "have used social protection strategies like cash transfer programs and redistributive taxation to offset the effects of poverty on opportunity" for the poor. Brazil stands out as one example."

Liz says that while it takes about 10 years to see if educational reforms would really take hold and turn around a declining educational system, the next president should not hesitate to give his all because there is no other choice.

"The new president cannot say I won't be around by then [after 10 years] so I won't pay attention to it. You have no choice. You have to pay attention. That's why we need an education president. There is no other choice."

A "COUNTRY IN PRAYER," organized by the National Secretariat Foundation of the Philippines with the presidential, vice presidential and senatorial candidates was held on April 11 at the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club with Bishop Chito Tagle as Presidential Master and more than 800 participants from civil society, ministries or parishes, religious groups, and media. Shown above are the candidates with Bishop Tagle and the NSF organizing committee—(from rear, from left) Sen. Richard Gordon, Justice Jose Luciano, NSF chair Dionne Salvador, Msgr. Pedro, Jun Chipeco, Charito Planton and Marina Pisonk; (second row) Ms. Grace Poe, Sen. Kit Tatad, Bishop Tagle, Sen. Loren Legarda and Adrian Dans; (third row) Jo Imbong, JC de los Reyes, Eddie Villanueva, Sen. Manny Villar (fourth row) Sonia Roco, Joe Lucuin, Nicanor David and Saka Palanca (right).

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RP summer capital wilting in the heat

From page A1

that residents here have begun queuing for ice and ice cream parlors.

The City of Pines have had summer customers, but this one strikes out judging from the way entrepreneurs have coped with the rising demand for cooling drinks and beverages.

"Everything we make is being bought," said Winnie Bebes, administrative clerk of the Baguio Ice Plant, one of the two ice plants operating here.

Iced coffee, halo-halo

Since the onset of summer, the plant's daily output of around 100 bags and 350 blocks of ice has been consistently sold out.

"We don't include the ice tubes. Some (customers) want to buy more than two blocks each but we have to ration (the product) because the demand is so high," Bebes said.

The head franchisee of a popular halo-halo chain has sold more than its usual production, according to an employee.

Even high-end restaurants have tried to cash in and started featuring ice-based products like iced coffee and halo-halo on their menu.

Hottest on record

The city slightly cooled down at 27 degrees Celsius on Wednesday following Monday's 30 degrees, which was already considered sizzling by Baguio standards.

Salvador Glisano, Baguio-based senior weather specialist of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa), reported that three days during the first half of April easily made it to the top 15 hottest days in Baguio on record.

The hottest day in Baguio was March 31, 1966, when the mercury rose to 33.4 degrees Celsius.

The second hottest day was on April 12, at 30 degrees. Third hottest was on March 9, 2003, when residents endured 29.4 degrees Celsius.

The fourth hottest day was on April 20, 1995, when the heat peaked at 29.3 degrees, Pagasa records showed.

The weather bureau cracked the temperature hitting 29.2 degrees on Sunday, April 11. The reading put the day at a "tie" with March 19, 1986, as Baguio's 28th hottest day.

Monday last week, April 5, entered the books as the 46th hottest at 28.1 degrees.

This year's heat wave was first felt on April 1 at 28.6 degrees Celsius. The temperature has since hovered in the high 20s.

Baguio's normal temperature range from a low of 15 degrees to a high of 26, according to the city government website.

Frank Cimatu, Inquirer Northern Luzon

HIGHLANDERS WILTING! The summer heat is beating down on the highlands, and even those who normally enjoy cool weather all year round are driven to seek comfort from ice cream.

Lakers and home schedule with win over Kings

LOS ANGELES — KYLE KUZMA HAD 28 POINTS AND EIGHT REBOUNDS and Rondo Rajondo tested as the Los Angeles Lakers finished their regular-season home schedule with a 108-100 win over Sacramento Kings on Tuesday. Other results: Bulls 131, Celtics 00; Jazz 100, Warriors 94; Suns 123, Nuggets 101. AP

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Coscolluela violated POC rules—Go

By June Navarro

FOLLOW THE RULES.

This piece of advice came from athletes chief Go Teng Kok after the Philippine Olympic Committee-denied recognition to Cignas Coscolluela, who was recently installed president of the Equestrian Association of the Philippines in a court-ordered election.

A member of the powerful POC executive board, Go said the group of Coscolluela violated several rules on the 2007 election guidelines set by the Olympic body for national sports associations.

Go said Coscolluela failed to notify the POC 15 days prior to the EAP election of officers on March 31 and ignored that any SSA election ordered by the judicial system could be considered as premature intervention according to the International Olympic Committee charter.

Coscolluela sustained POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco Jr. during the EAP election after 22 out of the 27 members voted in her favor. Cojuangco's group refused to participate in the election ordered by the Makati Regional Trial Court.

"She (Coscolluela) could win in as many elections they decide to hold but she would never get the POC recognition because they violated the guidelines," Go told the reporters. "The process (of the election) was flawed from the start."

The election guidelines were approved by the POC executive board and passed by the general assembly composed of 43 regular NSAs.

"I sent a lot of baptisms in the process. If she followed the rules, there's no reason for the POC to deny her recognition," said Go.

To top it all, Go emphasized that NSAs should first seek the blessings of the POC before inducting their newly elected officers.

Coscolluela and the newly-installed EAP officials took their oath last week without the backing of the POC.

Casio out but 2 Gilas aces back

By June Navarro

ACE GUARD JV CASIO IS OUT FOR AT least four weeks due to an injured knee but Jimmy Gilas has reactivated Rabeh Al-Hussaini and Roy Cervantes as it continued training for next month's 21st Fiba-Asia Championship Cup.

The 5-foot-10 shooting guard hurt his knee during the team's training camp in Belgrade, Serbia, almost two weeks ago and now wears a brace on his right leg.

"I will have my knee checked after the meeting is done," said Cuto, who was named Best Guard of the Dubai International Invitational last January when the national squad coached by Yeng Guiao finished third.

The initial findings by team doctors was a possible medial collateral ligament sprain. But would definite the former De La Salle-University standout be at least four weeks.

But if it's an ACL (anterior cruciate ligament) injury, Casio would miss not only the Fiba Asia Champions Cup on May 22-30 in Doha, Qatar, but Gilas' training in Las Vegas and Cleveland as well.

Al-Hussaini of Ateneo and Cervantes of Letran returned from injury last Monday.

The 6-foot-6 Al-Hussaini was sidelined for two months after an operation that required bone spurs on his left foot while Cervantes (6-6) missed the NCAA and NCAA-to-PBA/A game last year.

Nuyles lifts Falcons past Cardinals

By Cedelf P. Tupaz

ALEX NUYLES NAILED A LAYUP AT THE buzzer as Adamson escaped with a 68-67 victory over Mapua yesterday for its first win in the FilOil-Flying V Sanchez Five Pre-Season International Cup.

Nuyles capped his game-long brilliance by beating three Mapua defenders in finish with a game-high 22 points as the Adamson gallery erupted in celebration at the FilOil-Flying V Arena in San Juan.

GAME 1 TOMORROW
(MOA Arena, Pasay)
1 p.m.—San Beda vs. JP Rizal (U)
3:30 p.m.—Cebuana Lhuillier (A) vs. Mapua (U)

"He's the player that we expect to produce in the UAAP," Adamson coach Leo Austria said of the 6-foot-2 swingman from Albay.

"He's very determined to improve. He have a program just for him and he has followed it to the letter. Sometimes he get very angry and that is something that he needs to work on."

"It's a good morale booster because we have difficulty winning three games last season," said Austria, who also noted the trust shown by the Falcons on Nuyles to crunch situations.

In one play in the third period, Jun Colino had an opportunity for a wide-open shot on the baseline but opted instead to pass the ball to the trailing Nuyles, who had earlier dunked on Mapua's Mark Acuna in the first quarter.

"It's just good to see that his teammates trust him more," Austria said. "It develops his confidence."

The Cardinals, scoring off a strong showing in the Fr. Martin's Cup, looked poised to prevail in the nip-and-tuck battle when Allan Mangahas buried a triple from the corner with 4.7 seconds left.

Adamson used for time and set up the final play for Nuyles, who barred him only bankers in the fourth quarter.

Eric Camaso also made his presence felt for the Falcons with 16 points, while Colino added 12.

Austria did not hold Rookery Bronded, saying the Filipino-Australian rookie still needs to see more games to adapt to the college game.

In juniors' action, Far Eastern U rallied to a 106-96 demolition of the 80th Under-13 squad, which is playing in the tournament as a guest team.

Perpetual Help prevailed over National University 69-60, while University of the East trounced University of Santo Tomas, 81-77.

The scores:

First Game:
ADAMSON (68) — Nuyles 22, Camaso 16, Colino 12, Lucero 6, Dandan 5, Pineda 5, Bland 2, Nicolas 2, Salbuda 2, Cabrera 2, Mangahas 2, Arquisola 1, Libertador 0.

MAPUA (67) — Cornejo 16, Pascual 11, Mangahas 8, Ramirez 7, Jumapao 7, Bunal 6, Cruz 5, Cabrera 2, Pasia 2, Acuna 2, Ocampo 0, Antonio 0, Jadloc-Gonzales 0.

Scores: 18-9, 37-37, 50-50, 68-67

JAMES Posey of Coca-Cola (right) gets fouled by Jumbo Ibbitson Paul Arnaud of B-Meg Derby Ace in their PBA game tonight. JUNJIE MALIT

Tigers buck Penny's loss, nip Llamados

By Cedelf P. Tupaz

FIELD GOAL WOES DEPOSIT JAMES PENNY had to leave in the last five minutes due to an injury. Coca-Cola rallied for a dramatic 79-75 triumph over Derby Ace last night that gave the Tigers a share of the lead in the PBA Hydro Conference at the Araneta Coliseum.

The Tigers literally saw red when Penny left the game with a nasty cut on his right eyebrow from a wayward elbow by Derby Ace import Lorenzo Neals.

It took six stitches to close the ghastly one-and-a-half inch cut that bled profusely.

Coca-Cola, trailing 63-61 when Penny was injured, regained control as teammates Jeff Chan and Jeremy Pargo spearheaded the Tigers in their fourth win in five starts and a piece of top spot with Star (all-just).

"That was really character-defining for us to get back into the game even though we lost James Penny," said Tigers coach Ira Brown.

Penny, already single-handedly kept the Tigers in the game by pouring seven of his 20 points in the first five minutes of the fourth period when the Llamados hammered to pull away by the grabbed 16 rebounds before leaving the game.

GAME 2 TOMORROW
(Araneta Coliseum)
3 p.m. Texas Gas vs Barako Bull
5:30 p.m. Talk 'N Text vs Rain or Shine

Without Penny, Gary David held fort, scoring seven of his 20 points in the final four minutes, while Art Tadeus, struggling against the defense of Ball Hamic early on, also played a key role down the stretch, nailing a floater with 1:06 remaining to push the Tigers up, 78-75.

Coca-Cola could have wrapped it up early but David, Tadeus and Chico Lanete combined for six rimmed free throws in the final minute, allowing the Llamados to cut the lead, 79-78, after RO Cansino buried a triple with 30 ticks remaining.

Box scores:

COCA-COLA 79—Pargo 20, David 18, Mocorpus 10, Jacobs 7, L. Lanete 5, Nieto 5, Gonzales 5, Pronda 2, Gibbs 2, C. Lanete 0, Tadeus 0.

DERBY ACE 75—Wade 20, J. Yap 11, Cansino 9, D. Yap 8, Ibbitson 6, Hamic 5, Sumodobo 5, Lim 4, Abueva 3, Ramos 2, Ilagan 2.

Quarters: 20-12, 38-32, 61-61, 79-75

Aklan rookie jumper grabs Palaro limelight

By Mary Anthony Reyes

SAN JOSE, TARLAC — FIRST TIMER ADONIS Khaire Andronido of Western Visayas set a record Palarong Pambansa record recording three medal a third gold medal to boost his status as the new wonder girl of track and field at the Tarlac International Park here.

The 12-year-old from Aklan, who also raked the elementary girls' triple jump with a record effort Tuesday, prevailed in the long jump with a new mark of 5.07 meters that smashed in the old standard to win the 200-meter race in 32.09 seconds.

Two more track and field records fell while Central Visayas' Loren Dale Velarmo set one in swimming by eating the girls' secondary 100-meters freestyle with a time of one minute and .28 seconds.

Bicolandia's Ilano of National Capital Region won the boys' secondary 400 meters in 54.1 seconds with the rest of former national team stalwart Bennie breaking the old record of 55.7 seconds set by Jorge Pitancoring of CV four years ago.

Gin Buang of Central Visayas won the elementary girls' javelin throw with a heave of 40.63m with the tall and lanky 12-year-old from Cebu edging out the 39.63 mark of Mona Catalang of Western Mindanao two years ago in Palawan.

Also getting a piece of the spotlight was 17-year-old Isabel Sioval of CV, who grabbed the secondary girls' 100-meters crown in 20.9 achieved by Ronald Calmoon of Cagayan Valley in 1992.

"They (coaches) caught me the underages and I began to enjoy the sport," said the thrill-seeking Andronido, a ninth grader from Dumpit, New Washington in Aklan, in Filipino.

Her coaches said Andronido only had a chance to train on the multi-purpose track at the Aklan State University two days before the MV delegation left for the Palaro.

Minching Andronido's three-gold effort was swimmer Ishiel Sarmiento of NCR, who added the boys' elementary 100m freestyle title to his earlier wins in the 200m free and 100m backstroke.

Cadweden Bandalan of Calabarzon prevailed in the elementary girls' 100m free for her second gold medal.

Over at the Tarzeño Badminton Center, Calabarzon dominated the boys' secondary team competition with a sweep led by national pool members Philip Jake Ferrer and Jose Raj Marciano. The Big City-dwellers bounced back in the girls' secondary division.

SAGITTARIUS Cabrera of NCR takes aim during the archery elimination round at the Victoria National High School in Tarlac.

Carraine, Canja top Head-Digos netfest

JOANN CANJA AND JESSOF DAVE CLIPPER JUAN PAUL CARRAINE shocked their rivals in the first day of the Second Head Junior Series Tour Circuit at the Digos Tennis Club. Canja, the pride of Calapacuan, stamped her class in the girls' 18-under and 16-under categories, beating Chelsea Sacito of Visayas in both finals. Carraine beat local ten Alfredo Delos Santos, 8-4, 6-0, 7-6 (9-7), in the 18-under. Jeffrey Canja was the boys' 12-under winner, stopping Jericho Pulangan, 6-3, 6-2.

PHILIPPINES' Brian Francisco (right) and Ricardo Munoz of Panama pose during yesterday's press conference.

Francisco eyes 6th round KO of Nuñez

By Dennis U. Erce
Inquirer Luzon

HIGHLIGHTS HIGHER OF THE PANAMANIAN opponents, but Brian Francisco knows that on fight night his fists—dubbed as golden in the boxing world since in the talking.

"From what I saw on his previous fight, Ricardo Nuñez is an excellent fighter but I don't want to disappoint my countrymen," said the 27-year-old Francisco in Filipino during yesterday's press conference at the Dynasty Plaza Hotel for the world title eliminator dubbed by Solar TV as Young Guns.

Francisco (19-0-1, 13 KOs) and the 22-year-old Panamanian clash Saturday at the Ynares Sports Arena in Pasig City with the winner assured to fight for the WBA super flyweight title being held by Japanese Nobuo Nishiki.

"I'm in perfect shape. My training sufficient in all aspects," added Francisco, who trained under Boxing Coach Ito Dela at the Youth Green Boxing Gym in Agoncillo, Batangas.

The proud son of Sablayan, Occidental Mindoro said he intends to flatten Nuñez not later than the ninth round but is ready to dog it out the whole 12 rounds.

Dr. la Peña said Francisco logged a total of 200 rounds of sparring against Vincent Dalicta, Jun Rivera, Dondon Ramores, Robert Gonzales and Mike Magbuo.

"You will see a different fighter on Saturday compared with the Edan Esec bout. Robert Vasquez for the WBA International plans next year in Cuenca Amerindiana," said Dr. la Peña.

An orthodox fighter like Nuñez (17-3-0, 11 KOs), Francisco said he will use his speed to find the right opening against his foe.

"Once the right opening, I want to finish the bout by knocking Nuñez out in the 6th round. It will not be easy because Nuñez is tough, but I'm determined to stop him," Francisco said.

Francisco was joined by Saved by the Bell Promotions president and promoter Elmer Ansares, Nuñez, Panamanian trainer Ignacio Arroyo and concurrent Carlos Costa in the press conference.

Nuñez, ranked No. 1 by the WBC and No.3 by the WBA, said he is going to win the fight either by knockout or decision.

"Years is no excellent country of beautiful people. But I'm going to disappoint you and win the bout. I prepared hard and I came here to win."

Tigresses seek second VL win against Lady Cobras

GAMES TODAY (Filoil Flying V Arena)
2 p.m.—Adamson vs. St. Benilde
4 p.m.—Ateneo vs. Far Eastern U
6 p.m.—UST vs. FEU

AN OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE on opening day of the Shakey's V-League Season-7 first conference hasn't enlisted the nerves of University of Santo Tomas coach Ming Dela Cruz.

That's why he's urging the Tigresses to take their game up a notch again when they tangle with Southeastern University at 4:30 p.m. today at the Filoil Flying V Arena in San Juan.

The Tigresses have proven to be a second guard player after Mary Jean Balse, the season-ruby Delos Santos is wary of the threat posed by the Lady Cobras, who will be hammered by Thai Oranuch Laosuegrem.

"That of 18, I would say only 'soon 5,'" said Dela Santos. "But we will try to improve every game since all the teams want to beat us."

Clashing at 6 p.m. are University of St. La Salle-Bacolod and Far Eastern U, which proved easy picking for UST on opening day.

The encounter will mark the re-union of Lady Stingers coach Roger Bacaocha and his former ward, Michelle Laborte, who played a major role in USLB' runs to the national title in the late 1990s.

The Tamaraws, missing the injured Rhoera Gonzales, looked the Emperors to remark the Tigresses, losing 9-25, 13-25, 13-25.

Sources said a revamp is in the offing in the FEU camp after the V-League, with coach Nes Pamilar now scouting for players in the ongoing Palarong Pambansa in Iloilo. —Gerald P. Pajaro

Determined gold medal hunt now desperate?

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

IT HAS REMAINED A PAINFUL PUZZLE how the Philippines, with a burgeoning spine of boxing stars, cannot unearth one talent to win for the country its first Olympic gold medal.

Try hard as it did, RP which has long succeeded in placing a team of gritty climbers on top of Mt. Everest, cannot reach the less daunting Olympic summit.

Something must be wrong somewhere.

+++

The last two token Filipino gold **medalists** savored **times** around the globe. After two near misses—the silver-medal feats by featherweight Anthony Villanueva (1964 Tokyo Olympics) and Mansueto Velasco (1996 Atlanta Games)—the Olympic gold medal loomed doubly-elusive.

But while **not** even a dull bronze in three **Games** its last **three** Olympic outings—Sydney 2000, Athens 2004, Beijing 2008—the determined RP gold hunt has also started to turn desperate.

+++

A great part of the recent Olympic gold hunt had been solely reliant on the fistic Cuban experts.

But in a surprising twist, the new amateur boxing leadership used an all-Filipino coaching staff in the last Milan World Boxing Championships.

The experiment failed to produce a single medal.

What followed were talks about hiring European coaches, either from Bulgaria or one of the former Russian satellite states.

+++

There's actually this new prescription about raising the standard for members of the RP team.

OK, it's hard to tell if it's a result of an observation from a Chinese sports journalist about the crocheted[sic] stand of our top Filipino bet in the China Open last week.

To those who want to know where the desperate hunt has taken the RP boxing team, kindly share this piece of **reportage from Ed Picson, executive** director of the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines, in Beijing:

+++

We arrived in Beijing last Saturday and were met by chilly 3-degree weather with some winds to factor in. But the 15,000 Abup national boxers were warmly welcomed by our hosts here at the Shichahai Sports School in downtown Beijing.

The Beijing Boxing Federation, our host, claims to be the No. 1 boxing federation in China, and it's easy to believe it since a lot of national boxers are in their roster. We started training with their team on Sunday after our coaches conferred with five of their coaches and mapped out the strategies and progress for the joint training camp.

Our coaches are led by head coach Eric Geopt. Indies Velasco, Ronald Chavez and women's coaches Glenrie Catubio Jr. and Roel Velasco. We have 18 male boxers, including the seven who came here directly from the tournament in Guiyang (Suarez, Sahadan Mamao, Pedrito Flores, Mulligan and Lopez). Five women came from Manila—Annie Albania, Josie Gabuco, Alice Kate Aparri, Jean Lou Cruz and Nestha Pencio.

Regrettably, eight more of our male boxers and one female will follow this weekend after they complete their visa requirements. PSC is helping us with this. Another coach, Nicanor Arsenal, will accompany them.

Our boys had a rigorous session with the Chinese and both sides were happy with the two-hour activity. Yesterday, Monday, Wednesday and Friday are scheduled for partner play (technique and tactics with boxers from both sides facing one another, although in controlled fashion).

Saturday is reserved for sparring/competition and coaches of both countries have agreed to allow their boxers to let it all hang out. This will be the showtime for us.

We look forward to a very fruitful two-week camp.

Bayron shoots 65, grabs 2-shot lead

By Manong R. Castillo

BAYRON

CARMONA, CAVITE—JAY BAYRON turned the Manila Southwoods' Legends course upside down with a 7-under-par 65 yesterday for a two-stroke lead after the opening round of the Mercedes-Benz Masters Philippines.

The 23-year-old gunned down an eagle and six birdies before finishing with a bogey on the 18th to easily forge ahead of a three-way tie for second that included journeyman Roy Magnaoa and Asian Tour veteran Mars Pacia.

Magnaoa, 45, and winless since securing a Wake spot in the defunct Pure Gentleman's circuit seven years ago, had eight birdies against three bogeys, the last two after three getting the 17th and missing the 18th green.

Pacia, battled terrible heat and howling gusts in the afternoon to pen down six birdies against a missed green bogey on the 18th.

Nicholas Fung, the former Malaysian amateur ace, announced his arrival in ONLY runs in the national title in the late 1990s.

The Tamaraws, missing the injured Rhoera Gonzales, looked the Emperors to remark the Tigresses, losing 9-25, 13-25, 13-25.

Sources said a revamp is in the offing in the FEU camp after the V-League, with coach Nes Pamilar now scouting for players in the ongoing Palarong Pambansa in Iloilo. —Gerald P. Pajaro

for the day's third 67 and was the best-placed foreigner in this kickoff leg of the 10-tournament Asian Tour.

"I was just lucky to get it close to the holes," Bayron, who broke through on a par-4 second hole, had 31 putts.

Bayron, who earned six eight-foot pars for eagle on the par-5 14th set up by a 6-iron from 185 yards, came into that $860,000 event fresh from second place finishes in his last two events.

"It's tough normally to finish second each time," Bayron said. "I hope that trend doesn't continue for me."

Guido Van Der Valk, the Dutch man who finished second in the Philippine Open to Elmer Salvador, fired a 68 like Ayo Bersin, sharing Russell Brown, Steve Chamchoksin of Thailand and the highly regarded Justin Hegarman.

The top 10 at round opening 18: 1. Bayron 65-67—132; 2. Magnaoa 69-68, R. Pacia (68) 69-68, M. Pacia 70-68, Fung 68-70—138; 5. Brown 71-67, S. Han 69-69—138; 7. Hegarman 69-70, S. Chamchoksin (70) 72-70—142; 8. Chanthaphasong (70) 73-70—143; 9. Salvador 74-71, Gonzales (70) 74-73—147; 11. Yang (68) 73-74, S. Sahadan 74-73, D. Catalo 73-74, S. Thanyakijwanich (70) 75-73, A. Bersin 76-71, Espinosa (70) 74-73, Bautista 76-71—147; 16. Chinnaphatan (70) 76-72, C. Pompeyo (72) 78-72, M. Pia (70) 75-75, I. Sabuatan 80-69, K. Leopardo 80-69, J. Pamaong (70) 77-73, A. Fajardo (70) 80-70, E. Bland (70) 80-73, J. Mabe Jose 80-73, S. Mejia 79-75, K. Sayanthan (70) 80-75—150; 24. Dayao (70) 81-73, R. Galvante Jose 80-74, J. Bautista (70) 79-75, Sumsad 81-78, J. Bangalan (69) 78-78, Justin Han (70) 76-82, S. Bautista 81-78, Ambrosio (70) 80-78—158; 30. Mendoza (70) 82-77, Jose 81-78, Ambrosio 80-78—159; 33. Sumsad 81-78, J. Bangalan (69) 78-78, Justin Han (70) 76-82, S. Bautista 81-78, Ambrosio (70) 80-78—159; 36. Mendoza (70) 82-77, Jose 81-78, Ambrosio 80-78—159.

SPORTSWATCH

LGBA bulletcap derby today

FAST-PACED DRIVING TOYS ARE DESIGNED today at the Avenida Coliseum when the "Luzon Gas vs. Los Bombers Intercollegiate 7-Bulletcap Derby" kicks off at 6 p.m. Seventh Gear will try to topple champion Aaron Cecilio-Al Bulmaro and their team-mate Jayson Tiongson, who currently lead with 5 points each.

Taking 4 points against are the entries of Ebbey Hortaleza, J. Pamelo, Kano Hayes, Chairey Dela Cruz and Jeff and Jeremy Ty.

For details, call (0917) 617-7870.

Fascon, MLQU nip rivals

JOSSON SHAD ANE MANUEL L. BLE. son E. pulled off hard-earned wins in the 2010 CBBL Open basketball at the Ateneo de Manila University gym. Josshad-dled last year's runner-up Santo Tomas (L. 83-80), while MLQU topped FEU (Jose Reno 68-58) for late-opening day victory. Forward Angelo Hortaleza led the Scholars and Coach Bonbon and FEU Coach Jeremy.

Rizal rips Laguna, leads inter-province tilt

ANGONO, ANTIPOLO—RIZAL PROVINCE whipped Laguna, 3-1 (4-3) in the sixth round to take the sole lead in the 2010 National Inter-Provincial chess championship at the Cabaguio Training Center here Wednesday.

Powered by International Master Oliver Barbosa and Gary Lagaggi, Rizal also drew with Makati, 2-2, in the fifth round to take its battle to Region in the P350,000 tournament.

IM Oli-A, Barasoy-A and Makati shared second place with nine points with three rounds to go. IM Oli-A, led by GM John Paul Gomez, drew with Barasoy-A, 2-2, and Makati, 2-2. Barasoy-A then subdued Region, 3-1.

Pre-tournament favorite Tagaytay crushed Palawan, 3.5-.5, and Iloilo, 3-1, to climb to eight points with IM Oli-A-R, which finished losing Bicol, 4-0, and Sun Rolls Club 64, 2.5-.5, respectively.

At seven points were IM Lianne del Sur, Laguna, Cagle, Negros and Akiles-R.

MPC Lito Lapid (left) and Akiles Gov. Carlos Manpuno raise the tournament honors at the start of the 2010 National Inter-Province chess championships at the Cabaguio Training Center last Sunday. Standing are MCFP executive director Willi Alidon, Rep. Florencio Miraflores, GM John Paul Gomez, GM Darwin Laylo, Akiles provincial sports coordinator Wilfredo Nieri and Akiles VP member Jose Rodrigues

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DID YOU KNOW

BONIFACIO, Jose Street in Manila used to be known as Matibo, after Australian opera singer Nellie Melba who visited Manila.
Cpnl. Rosalinda Inquirer Research

Controversial judge's car bombed

PAMPILO: I have been getting death threats since 2009.

'I have no doubt that this is work-related'

By DJ Yap and Tina G. Santos

CONTROVERSIAL MANILA Judge Silvino Pampilo Jr. had a close brush with death yesterday morning after his car blew up in front of his house in Taytay, Rizal, just moments before he and his family members were to board it.

The explosion damaged the black Honda CRV of Pampilo, who presides over Branch 26 of the Manila Regional Trial Court, although the inside of the vehicle had been left largely intact, authorities said.

Senior Supt. Jonathan Ferdinand Munoz, Rizal police chief, said the bombing incident occurred at about 8:30 a.m. in front of the Pampilo residence in Palmera 3 Subdivision, Barangay Dolores. Pampilo, however, said the blast took place at around 8 a.m.—the usual time he leaves for work.

Munoz said Pampilo's Honda CRV, with plate number 167WCR, was parked unattended in front of the house when the explosive went off. No one was reported hurt.

The official said the car was not a total wreck and that the explosion had damaged only the wirings, including the rear fender that got detached from the vehicle.

The explosive used was not yet immediately known and the bomb squad took note of the presence of a black powder.

Munoz said what remained of a cell phone was also discovered at the blast site but investigators could not yet say if it had been the triggering device. "We didn't find any wires sticking to it," the official said.

A POLICE scene of the crime operative examines the vehicle of Manila Judge Silvino Pampilo Jr. after it was bombed in front of his house in Taytay, Rizal. ROY DOMINGO/INQUIRER

The motive is still under investigation. Munoz said witnesses are now walking around the area before the explosion took place but there is no element seen just yet inside.

He added that they still do not know whether the bomb had been intended to kill or just to threaten the judge and his family.

Pampilo, however, said he believes the attempt on his life may have something to do with one of his decisions or the cases he is handling.

"I have no doubt that this is work-related," he told the Inquirer on the phone. He said he already had a hunch about who was behind the attack but he refused to elaborate, saying it might jeopardize authorities' investigation of the incident.

However, in a radio interview, Pampilo said he had received threats from the Presidential Anti-Smuggling Group (PASG) when he issued an order in November stopping the agency from conducting its operations.

Last March, he declared the creation of PASG as illegal, invalid and unconstitutional.

Pampilo issued the order on the basis of a petition filed by female customs lady Ting Alpha Kwok, dubbed the "Diamond Queen," who questioned the constitutionality of the agency's existence.

The judge had also ordered the opening of the Big 3 oil companies' books and denied the plea of workers to stop the dredging operation of South Harbor.

CONTROVERSIAL, P.2A

HOW TO SET UP AND MANAGE SUCCESSFULLY A COOPERATIVE

SEMINAR: April 28, 2010, 1-5 PM, Richville Hotel, 280 EDSA, Mandaluyong City. **Topics:** Regulations Rules Policies, Taxation & Impact of 2008 Cooperative Code, Best practices, tips, techniques & trends for a successful Cooperative. **Speaker:** Atty. Noel Sandoval, Exec. Dir., Cooperative Development Authority. Early Bird 15% discount, (deadline April 15, 2010). To register, call Tokuro Knowledge Center Publishing: 331-6256; 521-0084, 0915-2284777; 0919-229-8760; inquire@globlist.net or tkcp_ph@yahoo.com
Limited seats only! Register Now!

BIR poised to pull out Makati vehicles for unpaid taxes

By Nonoy N. Dorotan

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE (BIR) intends to haul off vehicles belonging to Makati City Hall, citing limited jurisdiction by city officials in settling the city's unpaid taxes estimated at P1.2 billion.

"We are going to drive off with a number of vehicles within this week," said Revenue Commissioner Jose Mario Torres, adding that the agency plans to make use of the warrant of distraint and levy it filed earlier this month in the Register of Deeds. "This is not political. It's just that their efforts to pay the liabilities are not really moving."

The warrant covers all land and real property of the local government, including the City Hall building.

Sen. said Makati had not shown as much effort as the Metro Manila Development Authority, which needs to remit to the BIR withholding taxes on employees' salaries.

The MMDA owes the BIR at least P120 million in taxes for 2008 and 2009. The agency is also being investigated for possible deficiencies in the succeeding years.

The BIR chief reiterated that the Makati government could continue to operate even with the warrant, but admitted that pulling out the vehicles could affect operations in City Hall.

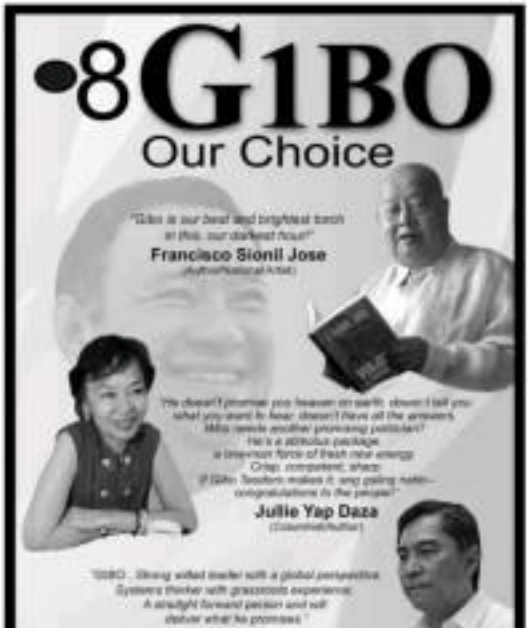
With the Register annotating the warrant, the BIR has the option to sell to a public auction of Makati's assets.

Torres added that if bids were below the total amount of Makati's tax deficiencies, the BIR would then be reassessed the new owner of the properties.

He said that the BIR may then start charging rent for the local government's continued use of the properties, like the City Hall building.

In a decision dated Dec. 16, 2009, the Court of Tax Appeals ordered Makati to pay the BIR P1.05 billion in deficiency taxes for 1999 to 2001 and P217.8 million for 2002 to 2004.

Based on a BIR assessment, which Makati officials are appealing, the assessment cover unpaid withholding taxes on salaries, value-added tax (VAT) and withholding taxes on PET.



Hospital arrest for Ivler sought

By Nancy C. Carvajal

LAWYERS OF ROMY RACE suspect Jason Ivler have asked the judge handling the murder case against their client to reverse an earlier order for committing him to the Quezon City Jail and place him under hospital arrest instead.

Apart from setting aside the order to commit him to the jail, we asked for his immediate [confinement] to the hospital until he has fully recovered for his mental surgery," one of Ivler's lawyers, Priscilla Mayo-Alvarez, said.

In a seven-page motion filed with Quezon City Regional Trial Court Branch 76 Judge Alexander Balao, the lawyers said Ivler's continued stay at the city jail was a threat to his safety and could aggravate his mental condition.

Ivler was transferred to the detention facility on April 6, before that, he had been confined at the Quirino Memorial Medical Center since Jan. 16 for two gunshot wounds he sustained in an encounter with National Bureau of Investigation agents who were serving his bail for the death of Waka-Waka Vivar Bautista.

The lawyers said their client needed a neurosurgery to restore his lost [range] of motion functions to normal.

With Orion Mike Pilapil, contributor

Priests cannot judge on morality issue

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

SEN. MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO says that she would not judge the endorsement of her running mate, presidential candidate Manny Villar, for the mail on the bread.

As a forum organized by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), Legarda was asked what she thought about the alleged womanizing who are endorsing Villar... would be using champion Manny Pacquiao, considering that Bodjing and TV host Willie Revillame.

Legarda replied: "Who am I to judge?"

The question was silly given that one seldom finds powerful, influential or famous men in this country who have not been involved to their wives at one time or another.

Even some members of the CBCP and priests have fallen prey to the sins of the flesh. I know of a former archbishop in Luzon, now in semi-retirement, who has two adult children. An other impregnated his secretary. Still another had an affair with a church worker.

A lot of priests in remote areas have children with women in their parish.

Msgr. Hideo Quitorio, CBCP media director, referring to candidates and their endorsers who are known womanizers said: "Why select a person who is limited if our goal is to build a country?"

The monsignor didn't know what he was saying because many of his fellow men of the clergy are themselves immoral.

Has he thus even seen Anna of Nazareth, who chanced upon people about to stone an adulteress to death, said: "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone?"

When it comes to morality in this country, nobody—not even priests...can pass judgment.

* * *

Presidential candidate Noriesty Aquino has denied that the Ever Security Agency (ESA) bagged contracts from the government during the presidency of his mother.

He admitted he was an incorporator of ESA, but added that he had divested when his mother became president.

In the incorporation papers, Noriesty gave his address as a house on Arlegui Street just across Malacañang.

The Cory moved into the Arlegui house only after she was installed as President, refusing to move into the presidential quarters inside the Palace compound.

Noynoy was not telling the truth when he said he had divested from ESA when his mother became president.

* * *

Quezon City Vice Mayor Herbert Bautista, who is running for mayor, probably committed graft during his term when he justified the huge amount in his budget as spent on food and drinks.

Bautista's yearly budget as vice mayor is P500 million yearly.

I was furnished documents showing that in 2009, Bautista spent P98 million for food and drinks, P82 million in 2008 for food and drinks and P103 million in 2007 for food and drinks.

All expenses for food and drinks were covered under "emergency purchase."

How can there be emergency purchase in socializing during calamities like earthquakes and typhoons, and is limited to only P50,000.

Example: On Jan. 16, 2009, Bautista's office claimed he spent P1 million on food and drinks, divided into P50,000 for each check voucher.

It's impossible for Bautista to have spent P1 million on food and drinks in one day.

But that's what the documents claim—on the spent and bites of peso every day on "emergency purchases" of food and drinks.

COA asks barangay chair to return P37.2M

By Nita Calleja

THE COMMISSION ON AUDIT (COA) has asked the chair of Barangay San Isidro in Makati City to return P37.2 million worth of barangay funds which were allegedly lost due to excessive spending, overpriced supplies and anomalous projects.

In a 176-page report on [audit] projects implemented by Barangay Chair Dedoy Julio Santiago from November 2006 to November 2008, the COA made several observations:

First, there were only two companies that submitted a bid for nine [bargaining] fishcourt (BR) projects.

Second, the addresses given by the bidders—Bonville Trading and JKC Bangka on Tandang—were found to be registered addresses in Antipolo and Makati, respectively.

According to COA, some P6.3 million worth of 66 projects ranging from a tennis clinic; a feeding program; green brigade activities; a medical mission; basic personality development; confidence, fashion dressmaking and personality enhancement; are workshop to a dental mission were "irregular."

It added that under the personality-enhancement program, P999,000 worth of underpants were distributed, which the government agency noted was not supported by any documents.

The COA also said that there were no documents or reports to prove that the nine projects were implemented.

In April 2009, barangay was ordered suspended by then Makati City council for his alleged involvement in several anomalous transactions, including the purchase of 681 [underpants] worth P21.9 million which were never installed.

He was reinstated in November 2009 when then Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, a resident of San Lorenzo Village, declared him of good character.

But according to the COA report, the barangay incurred unnecessary expenses for the [underpants] and paid almost P681,000 for their storage.

The agency also noticed that there were erasures and alterations on documents submitted to it to make it appear that the [underpants] were purchased after the holding of a bidding.

In addition, the COA said that the medicines bought by the barangay from Top Rank Pharma Inc. were overpriced "to the disadvantage of the barangay."

Based on a price check conducted in seven drug stores, COA said the generic and branded medicines purchased by the barangay were overpriced by four percent to 2,512 percent or a total of P3.2 million.

In its recommendation, COA asked Top Rank Pharma and barangay to refund the amount to the barangay.

MCLE FOR LAWYERS
(Bar Matter No. 1922)

Accommodation of the Mandatory Continuing Legal Education (MCLE) Board to graduate in all pleadings held with the Courts, the Counsel's Bond Certificate of Compliance or Certificate of Exemption. Failure to disclose the required information would cause the dismissal of the case and the suspension of the defaulting lawyer.

April 21, 22, 23 & 24, 2010
With topics on Administrative Matters and Election Controversies
Atty. Sharon S. Bautista

Venue: Hotel Intercontinental Manila, Makati (at the back of Manila City Hall, near LRT Station). Registration Fee for the Lawyer, Bond and Certificate if you are not yet issued MCLE, Inc. Certificate of Compliance: P2,000 (Bar Bond) and P3,000 (Bar Bond and Certificate). Fee may be paid: P1,000 (Bar Bond only). The fees cover Morning & Afternoon Snacks, Lunch, Lecture Handouts/Materials, and Certificate of Attendance. Payment may be made at MCLE Office, 851 City & Land Mega Plaza, ADB Ave. corner Sacred St., Ortigas Center, Pasig City or Landbank (NO. 766-0005-1) Quad: 541-4012 Manila: 7526-6779 / 404-1100 (LBP) 0000-0873-867

Sponsored by University of the East Law Center Inc.

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Regional Field Unit No. 1
San Fernando, La Union

INVITATION TO BID
(Supply, delivery and installation of 27 units Greenhouses with Specified Irrigation System)

The Department of Agriculture, Regional Field Unit No. 1, San Fernando City, La Union, through the Regional Project Management Office-Corn (RPMO-Corn) intends to apply the sum of Fifteen Million Pesos (P15,000,000.00) being the Annual Budget for the contract to THREE MILLION FIFTY THOUSAND EIGHTY THOUSAND AND FIVE PESOS (P3,050,080.00) for the supply, delivery and installation of twenty-seven (27) units GREENHOUSE with Specified Irrigation System in Ilocos Region, Cagayan Valley and CAR.

Bidding is open to all eligible bidders as defined in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act.

Interested bidders may obtain further information from the Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be acquired by interested bidders on April 19, 2010 from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee for the Bidding Documents in the amount of Five Thousand Pesos (P5,000.00).

It may also be downloaded free of charge from the website of the Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System and the website of the procuring entity, provided that bidders shall pay the non-refundable fee for the Bidding Documents not later than the submission of their bids.

It is the responsibility of each Bidder to determine for itself the site conditions and to study all other circumstances affecting the cost of the Bid and the Works, including but not limited to the following: (1) the location of the Works and its physical conditions at the site; (2) the extent and nature of the Works and Materials necessary for the execution of the Works; (3) the Bidding Documents; (4) the Laws, Decrees, Regulations and By-laws applicable to the Works; (5) the labor and other costs; and (6) the Bidder's obligations under the Laws, Decrees, Regulations and By-laws applicable to the Works.

The Bid Security shall be in any of the following forms: (1) Cash or Cashier's/Manager's Check issued by a Universal or Commercial Bank; (2) Bank Draft/Guarantee or Irrevocable Letter of Credit issued by a Universal or Commercial Bank; (3) Surety Bond callable on demand issued by the Government Service Insurance System or any surety or insurance company duly certified by the Insurance Commission as authorized to issue such security; and (4) Any combination of the foregoing. The Bid Security shall be denominated in Philippine Pesos and posted in favor of the procuring entity.

The Bid Security shall be valid for 120 calendar days from the date of the opening of bids.

The Bid Security shall be returned to all bidders except the Lowest Calculated Bidder, within ten (10) days after the opening of bids.

The Regional Project Management Office-Corn reserves the right to reject any and all bids, declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract to the Bidder likely to offer the lowest calculated bid or the Bidder with the highest rated bid, as the case may be, if there is prima facie evidence of collusion between appropriate public officers or employees of the procuring entity, or between any of them and any Bidder, or if the Bidder has a blacklisted record in the Department of Agriculture, or if the Bidder has a blacklisted record in the Government Procurement Policy Board, or if the Bidder has a blacklisted record in the Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System, or if the Bidder has a blacklisted record in the Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System, or if the Bidder has a blacklisted record in the Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System.

Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before 10:00 A.M. of May 3, 2010. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in any of the acceptable forms and in the amount stated in ITB Clause 18.

Bid opening shall be on May 3, 2010 at 10:00 A.M. at the address below. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend the activity.

Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat
Regional Project Management Office-Corn
Regional Field Unit No. 1
San Fernando City, La Union
Tel. No. (072) 607-8137

(Sgd.) JENELYN U. UTA, CESO III
Regional Executive Director

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
Regional Office No. VIII
DOLE Regional Office Building, Real Street, Tacloban City
Telefax No. (053) 321-2987

March 31, 2010

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATIONS FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMITS (AEP'S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office applications for Alien Employment Permits:

	Name and Address of Company/ Employer	Name of Foreign National/s Employed/s	Position
1.	ROHM SEMICONDUCTOR PHILIPPINES CORPORATION PEZA Zone, Tacloban City	Mr. Hiroyuki Sugimoto Japanese	Technical Advisor
2.	KOREA PARTS MANUFACTURING CORPORATION Leyte Industrial Development Estate, Isabel, Leyte	Mr. Sunghoon Bhagwan Japanese	Production Advisor General Manager
3.	SUPER 'D' TRADING & GENERAL CONTRACTOR INC. Downtown Center, Brgy. 4, Ormoc City, Leyte	Mr. Ruth Singh Indian	General Manager
4.	MAIN AUTOPARTS MANUFACTURING CORPORATION Mabini Extension, Ormoc City, Leyte	Mr. Ramapathi Sankar Japanese	Advisor President
5.	PARTS, INC. Cebu Veterans City	Mr. Hirokazu Kamohara Japanese	Liaison Manager Manufacturing
6.	PHILIPPINES GLOBAL FOR PLASTIC-MAKING CORP. PEZA Zone, Mactan, Lapulapu City	Mr. Yongjin Wang Chinese	Technical Consultant

If you have any information/comment on the above mentioned applications please communicate with the Regional Director.

ATTY. RICARDO S. MARTINEZ, JR., CESO III
Regional Director

Controversial judge's car bombed

From page A12

Other cases he handled included the $12 billion dollar-salting case against former Vice Lady Imelda Marcos and the one involving Silver Pesos, who was accused of killing an activist reporter Jerry de Leon.

"My neighbors are afraid because they see suspicious-looking men roaming around," Pamplo said, adding that as early as 2008, he had already been getting messages like "Magsisipa kita (I will kill you)," "Handa ka na ba (Are you ready?)" and "Balatkan ka ni (I will kill you)."

"I have been ignoring them because because I know that this is part of the hazards of my profession," he said. "I was also one of the target of the attack because according to the investigators, the bomb was placed under the driver's seat. It's just fortunate that I was still inside the house and was a little late in making my way to the garage."

He said he usually leaves his house at 6 a.m. to avoid getting caught in traffic and due to the distance between his house and his workplace.

"I was still dressing up when my wife and I heard a blast. We thought a power transformer had exploded but when we went outside, we saw smoke coming from the vehicle. The suspects—whom he knows do not have the work, I was told by my driver that they were there," he added.

He added the suspects could have planted the explosive between Tuesday midnight and early yesterday morning during a downpour in the area.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court asked the Commission on Elections (Comelec) to reconsider exempting judges from the election gun ban after an outrage on the life of two judges.

Court Administrator Jose Midas Marquez yesterday said he hoped the Comelec would realize that judges should be allowed to carry firearms during the election gun ban following day attempts against Pamplo and Bataan Judge Leo Principio.

With Rowena Paz-Policarpio

JUST A DRILL
Members of the Quezon City Police District face off with colleagues pretending to be prosecutors during a drill to prepare them for possible violent demonstrations after the May elections. —NOEL CELIS

Former SC justice wants to serve Taguig once more

By Mike Morales

DESPITE HIS IMPRESSIVE CREdentials, Dante Tiñga—a retired associate justice of the Supreme Court and former Philippine Ambassador to the United Nations—describes himself as a reluctant candidate.

In a recent interview, Tiñga, who is seeking to take over the post of his son, incumbent Mayor Sigfrido "Freddie" Tiñga, said it was his children who encouraged him to run.

"The objection came from myself," he told reporters.

It was initially reported that the Tiñgas would be clashing this time for the post.

"That was an option but the family decided that it should enter the political arena once again," the elder Tiñga said.

Running against Sen. Lani Cayetano, Tiñga's wife Carol and John Sumang, Tiñga, at 76, could be one of the more senior candidates seeking an elective post.

Brushing aside concerns about his health and age, he answered a question about his physical condition by saying: "What is age? It is just a perception."

Tiñga, his wife said, is kept alive by a pacemaker. His human registrar is noticeable from his broad shoulders to his strong grip when he shakes hands.

"I feel very strong," he quipped any. "If I'm sick, why would I even consider running?"

Before becoming Taguig Representative in the House of Representatives for three terms, he ran for mayor in 1998 but lost to Bienvenido Pagsa Jr.

After his loss, he returned to the seashore by serving as dean of the Polytechnic University of the Philippines' College of Law. He was called back to public service in 2003 when President Macapagal-Arroyo picked him to replace Chief Justice Constantino Austria Vicente Mendoza who was about to retire.

Tiñga admitted it was hard to resist the opportunity to steer Taguig, once a sleepy fishing town, to greater heights.

"Public service, or serving the people is a lofty, honorable calling," he said.

METROBRIEFS

Traffic to be rerouted

TRAFFIC will be rerouted in Makati City on Sunday, April 18, from 5:15 a.m. to 10:45 a.m. for the 12th Tour of the Feathers (T2F) with 8,000 bikers expected to pass through parts of Ayala Avenue, Paseo de Roxas and Makati Avenue with a short program to be held in front of Yuchengco Tower 1 in Rockwell Drive, Makati Stock Exchange Tower 1 and Makati Stock Exchange buildings. As early as 8 a.m., the southbound lanes and inner lanes of Ayala Avenue from Paseo de Roxas to Makati Avenue should take the outer lanes. Motorists and vehicles should turn right to Makati Avenue while light vehicles may turn left to Makati Avenue and Gamboa Drive from Ayala Avenue. With the start of the TOE, southbound vehicles should pass on the outermost lane up to Makati Avenue while bikers will use the two center lanes up to Gamboa Drive and Dela Rosa Street. Vehicles coming from Ayala Center should take the innermost lane and turn left to Gamboa Drive or take a U-turn going to west Edgeworth Drive. Left turns to East Drive and North Drive from Ayala Avenue are not allowed temporarily.

In addition, the COA said that the medicines bought by the barangay from Top Rank Pharma Inc. were overpriced "to the disadvantage of the barangay."

Based on a price check conducted in seven drug stores, COA said the generic and branded medicines purchased by the barangay were overpriced by four percent to 2,512 percent or a total of P3.2 million.

In its recommendation, COA asked Top Rank Pharma and barangay to refund the amount to the barangay.

'Final battleground' readied

BANGKOK—THOUSANDS OF RED-SHIRT protesters congregated in a tony Bangkok shopping district on Wednesday preparing a "final battleground" in their campaign to oust military-backed Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva.

The forces on the commercial heart of the city of 13 million came as the death toll from Thailand's bloodiest political violence since 1992 rose by two—a protester and a soldier—to 25 and as the prospect of further impasse looked set to dig growth in Southeast Asia's second largest economy.

"We will use the Ratchaprasong area as the final battleground to oust the government," protest leader Nattawut Saikua told reporters on Wednesday referring to the hotel and shopping district's cruple of blocks from Bangkok's financial area.

"There will be no more negotiations."

The so-called "Red Shirts," who have scorned "final" days of reckoning before, want Abhisit to quit after and dissolve Parliament ahead of new elections. They began leaving a protest site close to Government's clashes on roundabout at Ratchaprasong, which they have occupied for the past 10 days.

"Strategically it is a move that gives the Red Shirts an advantage," said Kantlat Thanarungthanayong, a political analyst at the National Institute of Development Administration.

"It's safer for them in the Ratchaprasong area and with a large crowd, chances of the security forces moving in are slim."

The area is home to Central World, the second largest shopping complex in Southeast Asia, and other big malls, which shut their doors when the protests began.

"They are holding the economy as

ANTIGOVERNMENT protesters pose for photographs in front of an abandoned armored personnel carrier as Bangkok's commercial heart on Wednesday. AFP

their hostage," said Ramkhamhaeng University political scientist Boonyakiat Kanwichakorn.

Bangkok was peaceful on Wednesday during the second day of the three-day Thai New Year called Songkran, after protesters called off a planned march on an army base where Abhisit has taken shelter during the monthlong campaign.

Tens of thousands of revelers took to the streets of Bangkok on Tuesday night, dousing each other with water and flour in traditional celebrations.

But tension could flare again when the holiday ends, and financial markets are likely to see renewed selling when they reopen on Friday.

Abhisit, who had been expected to rule out the snaps, appears more vulnerable now after the surprise announcement this week of an investigation of possible coup funding of his party and comments from the Army chief that only polls could end a crisis that has gripped Thailand since 2006.

Abhisit has said he would call elections by the end of the year, although his hand could be forced by a recommendation this week from the Election Commission that his Democrat Party should face charges of illegal funding.

If a court upholds the charges, Abhisit, who came to power in 2008 when the Army brokered a deal in Parliament, could be banned from holding office and Thailand's oldest political party could be dissolved. Any prosecution could take months, however.

Chumpol Silpa-Archa, leader of the Chartthai Pattana party, said coalition partners will supported Abhisit.

"We have no intention to pull out, but we want to see a clear roadmap to resolve the crisis, which eventually leads to a dissolution of parliament," he said. Reuters

Chinese cop chief sentenced to death

BEIJING—A Chinese court on Wednesday sentenced to death a former top police and judicial official who was convicted of abetting criminal gangs who ran rampant for years in the southwestern city of Chongqing.

The verdict against Wen Qiang, the former head of Chongqing's judicial agency and an ex-deputy police chief, brought to a climax a series of trials that lifted the lid on the seamy underworld in the city of about three million.

Wen, 54, was found guilty of taking more than $2 million in bribes, protecting and assisting with organized crime groups, rape and murder, reports, according to the government news website xinhuanet.com.

Wen is the highest-ranking public figure executed in a massive crackdown launched last year that has so far netted at least 4,300 detentions and hundreds of prosecutions. Nearly 100 officials have been jailed.

At least seven people have reportedly been executed or sentenced to death in the trials, which showed the public by exposing the impunity enjoyed by Chongqing mafia bosses and the officials who protected them.

The Chongqing trials have captivated the public, due in no small part to the salacious details revealed in court. Wen allegedly raped a number of women including B-list film and music starlets, and had affairs with subordinates. AFP

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Republic of the Philippines
Department of Labor and Employment
National Wages and Productivity Commission
REGIONAL TRIPARTITE WAGES AND PRODUCTIVITY BOARD
NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given that a public hearing on the matter of minimum wage adjustment in the National Capital Region is hereby set by the Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Board – National Capital Region (RTWPB-NCR) on 26 April 2010, 1:00 p.m. at Seminar Rooms A & B, Philippine Trade Training Center (PTTC), 2nd Floor PTTC Building, Sen. Gil Puyat cor. Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City.

All interested parties who may wish to present their position/ opposition on the matter are enjoined to attend the public hearing and may file their position papers with the Board on or before the schedule date of hearing at the RTWPB-NCR Secretariat Room 11-C, 11th Floor, G.E. Antonino Building, cor. T.M. Kalaw & J. Bocobo Streets, Ermita, Manila or send through telefax number 527-51-55 or email address: wage_ncr@yahoo.com.ph

RAYMUNDO G. AGRAWANTE
Regional Board Chairperson

Republic of the Philippines
SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM
East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. Nos. (632) 920-6401 to 07 loc. 3310, 3311, 3312
Email: bac@sss.gov.ph Website: http://www.sss.gov.ph

INVITATION TO BID
ITB No. 2010-021 – Goods

Two-Year Contract of Security Services for SSS Luzon Group

To provide security & protective services to the branch offices & other buildings of SSS Luzon Central Luzon, SSS Quezon Center, SSS West Luzon Center

1. The SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM, through the 2010 Approved Budget for SSS—Providing Security Services, intends to apply the sum of [illegible] being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) per Lot/s to be awarded under the contract for the Two (2) Year Security Services for SSS Luzon Group.

Lot No.	Area Description	ABC Per Year	No. of Guards
1	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
2	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
3	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
4	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
5	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at bid opening.

2. The SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM now invites bids for the above lot/s. Delivery of the SERVICES is required as per Schedule of Requirements. Bidders should have completed, within [illegible] years from the date of submission and receipt of bids, a contract similar to the Project. The description of a similar contract is stated in Section V of the Bidding Documents. Interested [illegible] may obtain further information from the BAC and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from [illegible] to [illegible].

3. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders starting [illegible] upon payment of a non-refundable fee for the Bidding Documents in the amount of [illegible].

Lot/s	Price
Lot 1	P [illegible]
Lot 2	P [illegible]
Lot 3	P [illegible]
Lot 4	P [illegible]
Lot 5	P [illegible]

The method of payment will be via a cash/check payable at the SSS Cashiering Department, SSS Main Bldg., Diliman, Quezon City upon presentation of this Invitation. The Bidding documents shall be released personally to the authorized Bidder or his authorized representative.

It may also be downloaded free of charge from the website of the Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS) and the website of the SSS, provided that the bidder shall pay the non-refundable fee for the Bidding Documents not later than the deadline for the submission and receipt of bids.

4. The Pre-Bid Conference shall be held on April 26, 2010 at 10:00 a.m. in the Board Room, 3rd Floor, SSS Main Bldg., East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City. All those who intend to submit bids are encouraged to attend the conference to seek clarifications and make comments on the Bidding Documents.

5. Bids must be received on the Board Room, 3rd Floor, SSS Main Building, East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City on May 10, 2010 and must be accompanied by a bid security in any of the acceptable forms and in the amount stated in ITB Clause [illegible].

6. Bid opening shall be on May 10, 2010 at 2:00 p.m. in the Board Room, 3rd Floor, SSS Main Building, East Ave., Diliman, Q.C. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below. Late bids shall not be accepted.

7. The SSS Bid and Awards Committee reserves the right to reject any bid, to waive any defect in the bidding process, and to accept the bid which is most advantageous to the SSS, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

8. For further information, please refer to:

Bids & Awards Committee
Attn: Ms. Lourdes Abad
3rd Flr., SSS Main Bldg., East Ave., Diliman, Q.C.
Telefax No.: 924-6401 to 07 loc. 3310/3311/3312
Email Address: bac@sss.gov.ph

Date: April 9, 2010

(Sgd.) THE CHAIRMAN
BIDS & AWARDS COMMITTEE

PSALM
Power Sector Assets & Liabilities Management Corporation

INVITATION TO BID

The Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation ("PSALM") Privatization, Bids and Awards Committee ("PBAC Committee") invites interested parties to participate in and bid for the Appointment as IPP Administrator for the

Contracted Capacity of the Malaya Thermal Power Plant with an installed capacity of 650 MW and located in Pililla, Rizal ("Malaya Contracted Capacity").

Interested parties must submit a Letter of Interest ("LOI") to the Committee which shall state the full name, address, telephone and fax number of the interested party, name of the principal contact, and signed by an authorized representative. The LOI must signify to the Malaya Contracted Capacity. All LOIs must be received by the Committee at the PSALM Office with address written in the Open Bandung Building (OBB) Apolo Avenue, Makati City, not later than **5:00 p.m. on 21 April 2010** (the "LOI Submission Deadline"). Only interested parties that submit an LOI by the LOI Submission Deadline shall be allowed to participate further in the bidding process for the appointment as IPP Administrator for the Malaya Contracted Capacity.

As a prerequisite to the receipt of the Bidding Package, interested parties shall execute a Confidentiality Agreement and an Undertaking pursuant to Section 73 of RA 9136, both in the forms provided by PSALM, and pay a non-refundable fee in the amount of **[Five Thousand U.S. Dollars (U.S.$ 5,000.00)]** (the "Participation Fee"). The Participation Fee shall be either in cash, manager's check, or cashier's check. All cash charges, if any, shall be for the account of the interested party. The Confidentiality Agreement, Undertaking, and Participation Fee must be received by the Committee on or before **5:00 p.m. on 23 April 2010** to entitle an interested party to further participation in the bidding process for the appointment as IPP Administrator for the Malaya Contracted Capacity.

The Bidding Packages which includes the Bidding Procedures, shall be issued during office hours (9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) from **26 to 30 April 2010** (the "Deadline") at the PSALM Office. Only interested parties in respect to whom the Deadline has been issued the Bidding Package by the Committee will be allowed to participate further in the bidding process for the appointment as IPP Administrator for the Malaya Contracted Capacity.

An interested party that submits the LOI must be the party that will participate in the bidding process, submits a bid, and enters into the pertinent agreements. Only an interested party submits the Confidentiality Agreement and Undertaking and pays the Participation Fee, such interested party may be engaged or involved in the bidding process, except through a consortium in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Bidding Procedures, among the requirements, of which are (i) such interested party must own at least a majority of the shares outstanding and entitled to vote in such consortium; (ii) the consortium must be a juridical entity; and (iii) a letter stipulating the joint and several obligation must be submitted to the Committee on or before the deadline set for the submission/bidding Procedures.

The schedule of the bidding activities shall be as follows:

Due Diligence	14 April 2010 (until 2 business days prior to bid submission deadline)
Pre-Bid Conference	2:00 p.m. on **03 May 2010** at the PSALM Office
Bid Submission Deadline	10:00 noon on **10 June 2010** at the PSALM Office

References to the dates and times shall be to wall-clock time. Should any of the above dates fall on a holiday, the deadline shall be extended to the same time of the next succeeding business day in Makati City.

A two-envelope bidding system will be adopted. Interested Parties will be required to post a bid security equivalent to **Ten Million U.S. Dollars (U.S. $ 10,000,000.00)** in the form of an irrevocable letter of credit which must be acceptable to the Committee. The bid security of the winning bidder shall be substituted by a performance security to guaranty proper, faithful and complete performance of its obligations under the transaction.

The details of the appointment as IPP Administrator for the Malaya Contracted Capacity are contained in the Bidding Package.

Letters of Interest, Confidentiality Agreements and Undertakings shall be addressed and submitted to: The Chairman, Privatization, Bids and Awards Committee, PSALM Corporation, 5th Floor, Bantayan Building, 6780 Ayala Avenue, Makati City, Metro Manila, Philippines. Interested parties shall be advised to call the PSALM Office or alternative number (632) 890-9088 or e-mail address jbuenaventura@psalm.gov.ph.

The Committee reserves the right to accept or reject any submitted party or bidder or proposal or bids therefore, or any part thereof, and/or to waive any defects contained therein and accept the offer advantageous to the Government, without offering any reason whatsoever. It does not disclose any obligation to pre-disqualify or subsequently disqualify any party or bidder that may arise as a result of their participation in the privatization process, nor does it guarantee that an award will be made. Finally, it reserves the right to modify, supplement, change, suspend or terminate the Bidding Procedures and other aspects of the privatization process at any time, including the schedule and the venue provided herein, for any reason whatsoever and without giving prior notice. Interested parties and/or bidders will be notified subsequently of such modifications, supplements, or changes.

(Sgd.) HON. JOSE C. RENCA
Chairman, Privatization, Bids and Awards Committee

The WORLD

Editor Lorenzo B. Gonzalo

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RESCUERS try to pull survivors out of the rubble of a building in Fenton county following Wednesday's 6.9-magnitude earthquake in a remote western Tibetan area of China. AFP

China quake kills 400, buries more

BEIJING—A SERIES OF STRONG EARTHQUAKES STRUCK A FAR western Tibetan area of China on Wednesday, killing at least 400 people and injuring more than 10,000 as houses made of mud and wood collapsed, trapping many more, officials said.

The largest quake was recorded by the US Geological Survey (USGS) as magnitude-6.9. In the aftermath, panicked people, many bleeding from their wounds, flooded the streets of Dingkai province township, where most of the homes had been flattened.

Paramilitary police used shovels to dig through the rubble in the town, footage on state television showed. Officials said evacuation vans were not available and with most of the roads leading to the remote airport damaged, equipment and rescuers would have a hard time reaching the area.

Ground phone lines, strong winds and frequent aftershocks also hindered rescue efforts, said Shi Dagang, a local military chief.

Workers were racing to relocate residents from a reservoir in the disaster area where a crack had formed after the quake to prevent a flood, according to the China Earthquake Administration.

The Wednesday morning quake was centered on Yutihi county in the southern part of Qinghai, near Tibet, with a population of about 200,000, mostly herders and farmers.

The USGS recorded six tremors in less than three hours, all [illegible] registered 5.0 or higher. The China Earthquake Networks Center measured the largest quake at magnitude-7.1.

The main quake cost confident Qiming as it toppled houses made of mud and wood, said Ravtsen Wylam, the Yutihi county television station's deputy head of news, speaking by phone from broadcaster CCTV.

"In a flash, the houses were down. It was a terrible earthquake," he said. "In a small park, there is a Buddhist pagoda and the top of the pagoda fell off. ... Now people are out on the street, standing in front of their houses, trying to find their family members."

The death toll rose to about 400 by afternoon, according to CCTV. An emergency official was quoted as saying that the number of injured has risen to more than 10,000.

The earthquake comes a little less than two years after a 7.9-magnitude quake in neighboring Sichuan province left almost 90,000 people dead or missing.

That quake flattened several schools, killing thousands of students. Poor design, shoddy construction and lax enforcement of building codes were found to be rampant.

In Jiegu, a township 30 kilometers from the epicenter that appeared to be near the second hit, the local Xin Inhgshi was trying to rescue 29 students stuck inside a school.

They were also working to pull out 30 to 50 people trapped in a toppled four-story building.

More than 80 percent of houses had collapsed in Jiegu, while large cracks have appeared on buildings still standing.

"The streets in Jiegu are thronged with panic and full of injured people, with many of them bleeding from their injuries," said Zhu Huaxiang, who goes by one name. AP

WORLDBRIEFS

Summit backs Obama

BUCHAREST, Romania—World leaders have endorsed President Barack Obama's call for securing all nuclear materials around the globe within four years to keep them out of the grasp of terrorists. But they offered few specifics for achieving that goal. The threat of nuclear terrorism was the focus of a 47-nation, two-day summit that ended on Tuesday—billed as the largest gathering of world leaders on US soil since the United Nations' founding conference 63 years ago. AP

Oops, wrong Ha

HONG KONG—Hong Kong's leading English-language newspaper has apologized for misidentifying Chinese President Hu Jintao as a jailed Chinese dissident in a front-page photo caption. On Tuesday, the South China Morning Post's main front-page photo (Inquirer) showed Hu arriving at the Bauhinia pier for President Barack Obama's motorcade security summit. The English caption identified Hu correctly, but the Chinese characters printed in parentheses showed the name of Chinese dissident Hu Jia instead. AP

Spanking harmful

WASHINGTON—Children who are spanked frequently at age 3 are more likely to be aggressive when they're 5, a recent study has found. The results mirror earlier studies which have found that children who are spanked have lower IQ scores and that frequent spanking has been linked to anxiety and behavior problems and higher risk of violent or criminal behavior. Researchers surveyed 2,000 mothers across the United States. AP

Lottery ticket found

JERUSALEM—A couple who won Israel's biggest lottery prize some forgot on Tuesday, wearing masks to hide their identities and claiming the $26 million payout, saying they had no idea they had been holding the lucky ticket for nearly four months. The couple appeared at a news conference and told reporters the winning ticket was languishing near the bottom of a pile of papers and old lottery forms at their home. They looked it this week and double-checked the numbers, discovering it was a winner. AP

General in child porn

PARIS—A French general who served as top military spokesperson in the 1990s was convicted on Tuesday of downloading thousands of images of pornography involving children, some as young as 6 months old, but given an unusually light sentence. AP

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RP seen missing rice output target

Verified crop damage amounted to P8.4B as of April 5

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE PHILIPPINES MAY NOT BE ABLE TO MEET ITS RICE production target of 7.4 million metric tons in the first half, according to officials of the Department of Agriculture (DA).

"While we are hopeful that we can still achieve [the target], we are prepared [that [our production] will be affected by the El Niño [dry spell]," Agriculture Undersecretary Joel Batallan said in an interview.

He said that verified crop damage as of April 5 was still at P8.4 billion, with about 300,000 tons of P12.2 billion in rice lost to the drought.

Batallan said the government was reassessing the country's full-year target of 17.4 million tons on harvests

BP B2 to

Stocks dip slightly

LOCAL STOCKS DIPPED SLIGHTLY YESterday as the strong run-up in recent weeks breathed many investors to lock in gains.

The main share Philippine Stock Exchange index gained 0.21 point or 0.009 percent to close at 2,299.06.

Trading was mixed across sectors, with the mining and oil, holding firms and industrial counters firming up and the financial and property sectors declining. The services counter was unchanged.

Despite the slight index decline, there were 85 advancers as against 57 decliners and 63 unchanged stocks. Value turnover amounted to P3.6 billion.

Some power and infrastructure stocks were back in play and were among the day's gainers—Manila Equity Ventures,

STOCKS B4

Gov't debt hit ₱4.44T in January

By Konrad M. Onorioga

THE GOVERNMENT'S DEBT STOCK REached ₱4.44 trillion as of January, rising by ₱40 billion from the end-December 2009 level mainly due to the issuance of global bonds, according to the Bureau of the Treasury.

With working age Filipinos numbering some 60.2 million, the amount of total outstanding debt would mean that each citizen 15 years or older has a share of ₱73,800.

Documents from the Treasury on the total outstanding debt showed that 55 percent or ₱2.43 trillion was borrowed from domestic lenders.

Local debt went down 1.6 percent month-on-month or by ₱39.8 billion from the ₱2.47 trillion posted in December.

The decrease was due to the government's redeeming more government securities than what was issued.

On the other hand, 45 percent or ₱2.01 trillion of the total outstanding debt was booked in foreign currencies.

Aside from loans extended by multilateral lenders and official aid from foreign governments, the Philippines also borrows internationally mainly through the issuance of bonds.

Foreign borrowings increased by ₱86.4 billion or 4.5 percent from the ₱1.93 trillion owed to overseas lenders in December.

The increase in the foreign debt was attributed mainly to the ₱68.3 billion worth of dollar-denominated global bonds issued in January and the depreciation of the peso against the dollar that hoisted up government liabilities by ₱20 billion. The appreciation of other foreign currencies against the dollar also increased the peso equivalent of the foreign debt by ₱6 billion.

In January, government debt payments in dollars amounted to an equivalent of ₱4.2 million while yen and euro loans stood at ₱25.9 billion and ₱74.9 billion, respectively.

Meanwhile, the government's total contingent debt—composed mainly of

BP B2 to

Net FDI inflow down by 74% to $101M in Jan.

By Michelle V. Rosica

THE COUNTRY POSTED A NET INflow of foreign direct investments in January, but the amount was lower than the year-ago level.

This shows that investors have become more cautious in view of the elections in May.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas yesterday reported that the net inflow of FDIs in January hit $101 million, down by 74 percent from the $393-million level ago.

In a statement, the BSP said the net inflow remains "fluid" despite sentiment toward the Philippines and the global economy was still positive.

Some multinational companies reinvested portions of their income in the Philippines, while others lent money to their subsidiaries in the Philippines for expansion and other purposes, the central bank said.

"Non-residents' inter-company loans and reinvested earnings contributed to the inflows for the month of January," the central bank said.

Data from the central bank showed $145 million worth of gross inflows and $44 million in gross outflows of FDIs in January.

Monetary officials said the decline in the FDIs in January might be temporary, projecting an improved picture in the following months.

Under the BSP's official target, net inflows of FDIs are supposed to hit $1.63 billion for the entire year. Officials said, however, that the target might be conservative given the improving sentiments of foreign investors on developing countries like the Philippines.

Foreign exchange traders said the recent appreciation of the peso into the 44-to-a-dollar territory was brought about by rising inflows of investments and remittances.

They said the peso was moving in tandem with other Asian currencies, which are benefiting from an improved outlook of foreign investors. Countries in the region are expected to lead this year's global growth, thereby encouraging investors to place funds in Asian countries.

Traders said though that the peso's rise might be temporarily disrupted in the days nearing the elections. They said investors usually shy away from markets when elections are about to be held. Nonetheless, they expect the peso to regain strength following the elections.

Last year, net inflows of FDIs reached $1.95 billion, surpassing the official target of $1.6 billion. This was partly the doing of the country's relatively better performance in tempering the ill effects of the global crisis. While many industrialized countries fell into recession in 2009, the Philippines managed to post a growth of 0.9 percent, which was slower than the 3.8 percent in the previous year.

Hurry monster

BREACTIME

Conrado R. Bautista III

WITH EXACTLY 77 DAYS LEFT IN THIS vote administration, the BSP is clinging to its decision to spend billions of pesos of our money to import new peso bills.

The importation may very well be called a "midnight deal" in other countries.

Here, however, as BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo announced, the BSP must just hurry up the order for some 500 million pieces of the new bills.

This country will have a new president in less than three months. I thought it would be nice for us to have his signature (not the Lolo's) on the bills.

And so why does the BSP have to hurry up the monster project?

* * *

BASED on its timetable, the BSP wants us to see the new bills by November this year. Because of time constraints, the BSP will import the new bills. Again!

That was the BSP's consistent brilliant move for the past seven years or so, having our currency printed abroad, instead of us printing the bills ourselves.

Only nine other country in the world still does not print its own paper currency—it is none other than ... Nigeria.

The BSP has a money haven in Quezon City, set up more than 30 years ago, and so the machines are tooled-to now.

That was perhaps why the BSP just bid October, announced that it would hold a public bidding for new printing machines.

After the awarding of the contract for new machines, the BSP would have an operating money factory again in it six months.

All of a sudden, the BSP cancelled the bidding. It gave no other reason than to plan to scrap the "specifications" of the new peso bills.

But how come the BSP could not include such "specifications" in the bidding for the new printing machines? The BSP did not say.

Worse, the BSP wants to have our money made abroad, pretoil.

* * *

IN AUSTRALIA, the police made public its findings on possible corruption involving the Central Bank of Nigeria under the former governor Chukwuma Soludo.

Again, Nigeria is one of only two countries in the world that still imports its bills. Again, the other one is the Philippines.

The Australian police reported that the Nigerian central bank allegedly received bribes from an Australian company named Securency.

The Nigerian central bank officials denied the allegations.

Enemy Soludo's term as governor, the Nigerian central bank awarded a multimillion dollar contract for the supply of new bills to the Nigerian Mint Co., which then outsourced the order from Australian firm Globe Securency.

According to the Australian police, Global Securency made multi-million dollar payments to bank accounts of two Britain-based businessmen. The police said these businessmen were linked to the printing deal in Nigeria, alleging that the money was eventually given to Nigerian officials.

The police said they had evidence showing that Global Securency wired at least $12-mil. lion to the suspicious bank accounts.

Really, there are such issues in the world's currency printing business.

* * *

I DON'T know—nor BSP is different. I know that BSP Governor Amando Tetangco, Jr. has an unrolled reputation. But the facts in the BSP's move to import new bills, dropping its rehab plan for its mint facilities, are frightening.

Until you, the business community is already suspecting bad things.

No one, is it possible that some groups are using the BSP to launder dirty money through the importation of the peso bills?

That the BSP for the last seven years, instead of importing our banknotes, instead of rehabilitating its post-old printing plant, is rather hard to explain.

Last year alone, the BSP ordered as many as 900 million banknotes from abroad. The cost was not made public.

* * *

HERE is another one for the books:

The developer of a condo at The Fort converted three floors of the building—originally for parking—into residential and office units.

The condo then stopped the conversion through an injunction, following a case filed by the Fort Bonifacio Development Corp., which owns the former military base in Taguig City. No trial date has been set yet.

Still, reports said the courts had ordered the developer (a company owned by a certain Philip Go) to stop selling the three floors as residential or office units.

The Go group reportedly claimed that the conversion was already sold to some retired military officers, whose names could not be divulged for "security" reasons.

Then were supposedly military officers, mind you. And they many since then "security"? Do I take it that the ordinary civilians folk....are, you and me....should be worried a thousand times over?

* * *

ANYWAY, the judge handling the case, RTC Judge Louis Acosta was quoted as saying: "We are in the city and not in the battlefields. Why are they hiding? The excuse is unreasonable."

Now, try to Google the name "Go," and you may come across reports in Queensland (Australia) regarding a certain Go who was investigated by authorities recently allegedly for smuggling plants that snared cocaine earlier in the report.

To stop the spread of the plant disease, according to reports, the Australian government had to destroy several affected plantations.

* * *

PSBC TOLD the court that the conversion would "destroy" the project's master plan, affecting other unit buyers, since it was a violation of the agreement between PSBC and the Go group, which remained sometimes.

The Go group denied knowledge of the conversion, even claiming that Taguig city officials approved the conversion, which would give the group some 4,000 square meters more residential or office space, but cutting down the parking door from the original 325 to 106.

In effect, PSBC leased that if it corrupted the Go group from such restrictions, PSBC would lose control over all the other lessees. Thus, PSBC is asking the court to rescind the sale of the land to the Go group.

Interestingly, the same group is developing another property that they also bought from PSBC.

Foreign lenders OK common blacklist of corrupt contractors

MULTILATERAL LENDERS—including the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank—have agreed to create a common blacklist of firms found to have engaged in corrupt activities in winning projects financed by these lenders.

The agreement is aimed at safeguarding the integrity of loans and grants that these institutions extend to help recipient countries progress, economically and socially.

Besides the World Bank and the ADB, other development lending institutions that signed the agreement were African Development Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, European Investment Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, and World Bank-sold International Finance Corp.

The International Monetary Fund, which lend to countries suffering from external liquidity problems, also supports the agreement.

In a roundtable discussion with business reporters and editors of the Inquirer Monday night, Yeong Jaan of the ADB said the agreement was formulated during a meeting attended by representatives of the concerned institutions which was held last week in Luxembourg.

"The idea is for each of us (multilateral agencies) to share its own blacklist so that there will be a common list," said Jaan, ADB country director for the Philippines.

With a common list, a company blacklisted by one multilateral agency may be barred from vying for contracts for projects funded by the other development lenders.

In the Philippines, an incidence of corruption involving a project funded the World Bank was earlier reported. Michelle V. Rosica

PSALM bidding out Malaya contract

By Amy R. Roma

ENERGY POWER SECTOR ASSETS and Liabilities Management Corp. is seeking investors who will manage the independent power producer administrator contract for the 600-megawatt Malaya thermal power plant in Pililla, Rizal.

According to bid documents, the bidding for the PPA will be held on June 16.

Only prospective investors who submitted letters of interest by April 21 will be allowed to participate in the bidding.

An open update to the receipt of the bidding package, interested parties must execute a confidentiality agreement and a nondisclosure, and put a non-refundable participation fee of $5,000. These should be accomplished by April 26, PSALM added.

Bidding packages will be issued from April 28 to 30. Prospective investors can conduct due diligence from April 1 to until two business days prior to the bid submission deadline. A pre-bid conference will be held on May 12.

A two-envelope bidding system will be adopted. Interested parties will be required to post a bid security of $30 million in the form of an irrevocable letter of credit.

Two publicly listed companies have expressed interest in the PPA contract for the Malaya facility, namely Pacific Inc.-led Team Asia Oil and Energy Development Corp.

Korea Electric Power Corp., Sithengi Al Philippine subsidiary Kepco Philippines, recently acquired the Malaya thermal power plant.

Republic Act No. 9136 or the Electric Power Industry Reform Act requires PSALM to privatize at least 70 percent of the contracted capacities of National Power Corp.'s IPPA.

Ayala Land eyes $300-M REIT offering in 2nd half

By Doris C. Dumlao

PROPERTY GIANT AYALA LAND INC. is planning a P300-million initial public offering of real estate investment trust (REIT) certificates this year alongside a second capital spending to boost businesses across residential, office, retail and leasing segments.

ALI has mandated American banking giant JP Morgan Chase as its financial adviser on the planned offering of REITs, instruments that give investors the option to invest directly in the finished product instead of the property developer itself.

The IPO could be pursued in the second semester of this year, with BPI Capital Corp. as among the underwriters, ALI president Antonino Aquino said in a briefing after the company's stockholders' meeting yesterday.

ALI chief Finance officer Jaime Ysmael added that P300 million, equivalent to about a third of its market capitalization, was deemed by advisers as the appropriate size for a REIT offering by a company the size of ALI. But the money to be banked in the REIT offering has to yet to be determined, he said.

Taps JP Morgan as adviser

"We will make sure that we pick the right assets and identifying a clear growth strategy since REIT depends on the growth story," Ysmael said.

Property developers with assets that provide recurring income like ALI—such as shopping malls, hotel and office buildings—are waiting for the government to issue the implementing rules and guidelines on the eternally pursued REIT law.

REITs are seen as attractive to the cash-rich financial market because the law requires the distribution of 90 percent of income annually which means that investors can look forward to cash dividends on top of potential stock price appreciation.

Under the law, REITs must have at least 1,000 public shareholders, with each owning at least 50 shares. The shareholders must own at least a third of the outstanding capital stock. The minimum paid-up capital must be P300 million. At least 75 percent of the deposited property of the REIT must be invested in or consist of income-producing real estate.

ALI, which is celebrating on a record P27 billion capital expenditure program for this year, also expects full-year net profit results to be better than the level scored ago as well as the level a quarter ago, despite the lull.

The property blue chip has mapped out an expansion program that includes an aggressive initiative to tap into the low-cost residential property segment, the building of small-format, community-style shopping malls and the entry into Batangas hotel and resort businesses.

During the stockholders' meeting, Aquino said ALI was expanding into Davao city and Tacloban city still after 30 percent growth seen when it unveiled its other establish-to-strengthen its presence in various Dutkowski expansion efforts.

Forty-six new projects have been lined up for launching in 27 of the 30 growth areas. On the residential front, more than 9,000 residential units in various projects will be launched this year, almost four times the offering in the previous year.

SMC triples '09 net profit to ₱57.8B

By Doris C. Dumlao

SAN MIGUEL CORP. TRIPLED ITS CONSOLIDATED net profit to P57.8 billion last year from 2008 due to one-time gains from the sale of a big stake in flagship beer unit San Miguel Brewery Inc. (SMB).

SMC alone booked P19 billion in net income for the year, which is still flat compared to 2008 figure, on modest growth in beer sales.

Most figures used therein San Miguel Inc., on the other hand, swung back to profitability with a net profit of P751 million compared to a P279-million net loss in 2008.

San Miguel booked a consolidated net profit of P19.3 billion while 2009 reported a net income of P10.04 billion in 2008. Last year, however, profits were shored up by a P8.6-billion windfall from the sale of a 45.22-per cent stake in SMB to Kirin Holdings of Japan.

Consolidated sales revenues last year grew 4 percent to P174.2 billion while earnings exhibited operating income crashed P19.7 billion, up 19 percent from a year ago. This was achieved amid a difficult global economic environment for much of the year to record cost disruptions implemented across its businesses helped sustain the company's strong performance, San Miguel said.

As the company begins to recover from its downturn, San Miguel said it will continue to invest for the future and deliver value in its shareholders through strategic investments in higher-growth ventures such as infrastructure, energy, mining and telecommunications. These new businesses identified to provide double-digit returns as against the single-digit returns from its traditional food and beverage businesses.

ABS-CBN raises 2010 capex by 15%

By Paolo G. Montecillo

ABS-CBN BROADCASTING CORP. is spending 15 percent more this year to broaden its viewer base and improve the quality of its programming, amid stiffer competition expected in the local television scene this year.

The Lopez-led TV station operator today said it planned to spend more in the acquisition of film and program rights to ZOOM to a bid to keep the network to the top of the coveted nationwide ratings ranking.

For 2010, the company expects to invest approximately P5.4 billion for content expenditures and acquisition of film and program rights, P400 million higher than that of 2009," the diversified firm disclosed.

The firm said its capital expenditure and rights acquisition budget reached P3.95 billion last year, or just one percent or P53.32 million higher than the outlay the year before.

Capital expenditures, in the money a company spends to improve or upgrade deployment assets, increased by P222 million or 11 percent year-over-year to P2.18 billion. This was used mainly for "production equipment upgrades and replacement, broadcast network infrastructure upgrades and expansion, digital media asset archiving and management system upgrades, and network conversion to digital signal delivery and broadband services expansion," ABS-CBN said.

Meanwhile, spending for film and program rights acquisitions for the year shown CE percent to P398.8 million to P784.92 million in 2009 mainly as a result of lower program acquisitions for cable channels.

ABS-CBN said it had an average audience share of 49 percent during primetime hours in the February to December period of last year. This was a 14-percentage-point margin over its nearest rival GMA Network Inc., based on a nationwide survey conducted by media firm Taylor Nelson Sofres.

Stocks dip slightly

From page B1

Atlantic Wires, Hotel Holdings, LMG Holdings, Manila Water and Republic.

PSEi-tied Universal Robina were likewise among those that declined 0.5 to 0.6 percent.

On the other hand, large-cap stocks SM Investments, Ayala Land and Bloomberg outperformed to push it up.

The index is now trading at a 20-month high but is having a hard time breaking out of the psychological 3,800 mark.

"This is partly due to the fact that value-seekers are getting overpriced at around the PE (price-earnings ratio)," said local stock brokerage AB Capital Securities Inc.

PE ratio of 16 means that investors are paying P16 times the amount of money that the market is making in a given year.

AB Capital said initial support for the PSEi was at 3,720 while resistance levels are at 3,800 and 3,861.

Doris C. Dumlao

RP seen ...

From page B1

as the main engine in the second semester could still make up for losses in the January-June period.

He cited new irrigation projects such as the Pantabangan-Angat link created by the National Irrigation Administration.

Another official, however, said the development project "overdoing" the projections. Gone but one good opportunity as a whole.

Willard going into specifics. The official said the agriculture agency would reduce its production targets.

Meanwhile, former agriculture chief Williams Dar voiced doubt on whether the government could achieve its rice self-sufficiency goal by 2013 given its mitigation preparedness for the current drought.

Citing government figures, he said in a forum that only about 60 billion has been released so far that year out of an allotted P151 billion for the program.

Dar urged the agriculture agency to release more funds for water engineering as preparation for future drought cycles.

The Philippines, Dar warned, could soon rely on traditional importation of rice such as the case in the early 2000s if its "low rate of global rice stocks could be traded or sold.

"What will happen if China and India enter the [rice] market? There will not be enough supply. So, even if we have money (to buy), we might not get anything," Dar said.

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SMC to give up majority stake in key subsidiaries

Napocor seen staying in the red in 2010

By Amy R. Remo

STATE-RUN NATIONAL POWER Corp. is expected to again post a loss this year, according to acting Energy Secretary Jose C. Rizalin.

Although Napocor has yet to come out with an audited financial statement, Rizalin also said the government expected the 2009 net loss to be slightly lower than the 2008 level due to the cost cutting measures Napocor had implemented.

However, since almost all of the power generating assets of Napocor had already been privatized by the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp., the state-run firm's cash flow had also dropped substantially, Rizalin said.

PSALM, also a state-owned corporation, was created under the Electric Power Industry Reform Act to handle the liabilities of Napocor and to manage the privatization of its power assets. It had absorbed almost all of the liabilities of Napocor, Rizalin added.

Meanwhile, documents from the Department of Budget and Management earlier estimated Napocor's loss to have reached P5.9 billion in 2009, an improvement from the previous year's loss of P7.2 billion.

The improvement was partly due to a 31 percent drop in the operating expenses despite posting lower revenue during the year.

Napocor revenue in 2009 was estimated to have reached P3.02 billion, slightly lower than the P4.47 billion recorded in 2008, documents showed.

The power-generating firm's operating expenses were at P1.55 billion, down from the P1.29 billion posted in 2008.

Allocation for other operating expenses was significantly reduced by P1 billion as it managed to dispense most of its power generation assets as of 2009, achieving a privatization level of more than 69 percent.

Improvements in the bottom line in 2009 could also be attributed to the absence of losses due to foreign exchange fluctuation, unlike in 2008 when it posted a P683.7 million loss due to currency changes.

By Doris C. Dumlao

SAN MIGUEL CORP. PLANS TO GIVE UP its majority stake in core beer, food and packaging units in line with the strategy to diversify further into capital intensive but higher-yielding heavy industries.

This is a major shift from its earlier plans to reduce shares in key operating subsidiaries but keep a majority stake in each. By selling more than a 51 percent stake in its prized subsidiaries, however, it is expected to attract a better price from investors.

The conglomerate also wants to raise funds by selling shares to new investors to will then sell existing common shareholders to amend company bylaws to give management the flexibility to issue new shares without offering preemptive rights to existing shareholders, the company announced yesterday.

Conglomerate plans more investments in heavy industries

In a statement, San Miguel said it would ask shareholders during the stockholders' meeting on May 31 for the authority to sell more than a 51 percent stake in core subsidiaries as well as amend the bylaws to make it easier to issue shares to new investors.

"Partnering with world class leaders in our beer, food and packaging industries will improve our ability to focus on our new portfolio of energy, power, infrastructure, and mining assets, while at the same time helping fund expansion in our core businesses," San Miguel president Ramon Ang said in a statement.

"San Miguel's strategy is significantly enhance and create long-term shareholder value by looking at new drivers of growth that require the further sell down of our stake in existing core businesses. We want to be able to act with speed when an opportunity to divest or an attractive price materializes," he added.

Its strategic partner in SMC-Kirin Holdings of Japan, for instance, wants to raise its interest in the beer unit from the current 48 percent.

San Miguel's multifocused businesses currently provide a stable single-digit return as against the prospective double-digit returns in heavy industries.

The company's board has already approved the proposed amendment in the company's articles of incorporation.

Cement sales up 11.2% in '09

LOCAL SALES OF CEMENT ROSE BY 11.2 percent in 2009 to 14.6 million metric tons, after remaining fairly stagnant over the past 10 years, according to an industry official.

"As the subdivision of a Makati Business Club briefing, Cemento Manufacturers Association of the Philippines president Ernesto Ordoñez said the increase can be attributed to increased election spending which "went crazy" in the latter part of 2009.

Ordoñez said the spike in 2009 can also be traced to the increased construction in the second half of the year, to the aftermath of Tropical Storm Ondoy, which ravaged Metro Manila and other parts of Luzon.

Sales last year were higher than expected by CMAP, which earlier projected "moderate growth of 2009 sales as the financial crisis hits the construction industry."

With increased election spending (in June, October and sales went up in the first two months by 10.7 percent to 2.3 million MT.

He said, however, that sales might slow down in the second half.

For 2010, Ordoñez said he expected domestic sales to grow by a modest 4 to 6 percent.

Ordoñez also said domestic cement sales began to pick up in 2008, which registered a minimal 2.6 percent growth. Amy R. Remo

Steel firms buck plan on GI sheets

LOCAL STEEL PRODUCERS THEIR-die said the industry was being threatened by a new government policy that may raise prices of galvanized iron sheets.

According to a source, the Bureau of Product Standards of the Department of Trade and Industry wanted to increase the minimum thickness of GI roofing sheets.

"We believe there is no need to increase their internationally approved standards since we're all ISO compliant already," the source said.

Based on metal industry calculations using prevailing market prices, increasing the minimum thickness of GI sheets would raise the prices of GI sheets by P3 per linear foot or P36 per GI sheet (based on the standard 6-foot sheet), the source said. Amy R. Remo

Canadian mining firm raises $2M for nickel project

By Roz T. Delfondo

CANADIAN MINER MBMI RESOURCES Inc. has raised $2 million to fund the continued development of its nickel projects in the Philippines.

The company's flagship project is the Alpha nickel project in Narra, Palawan.

In a statement, MBMI said that it had arranged a private placement financing of 16 million units at $0.30 per unit.

The company expects gross proceeds of $2 million from the private placement.

Each unit, MBMI said, consisted of one common share and one full common share purchase warrant.

Each full warrant entitles the holder to purchase one common share at a price of $0.50 within three years.

All issued common shares will be subject to a four month hold period, and are subject to TSX Venture Exchange approval.

The proceeds will be used for exploration and development of MBMI's Philippine nickel mineral properties, and for general corporate purposes.

MBMI previously reported that it was raising funds through private placement and loans. In September 2009, the miner availed itself of a $3 million secured loan from GC Global Capital Corp.

The Canadian miner and its partners have an interest in nine nickel laterite projects in the Philippines. The properties cover about 22,000 hectares.

MBMI's objective is to become a major supplier of high-grade nickel products to primary industrial customers in Asia.

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LIFESTYLE Food

LIGHT and creamy corn dessert

Coco Corn Gelatin for summer

By Vangie Baga-Reyes

A COOL, REFRESHING dessert like this creamy corn-filled gelatin combined with coconut milk helps beat the summer heat.

Coco Corn Gelatin is an Asian version of Italy's famous dessert panna cotta. It's softer and richer and is made more flavorful with the addition of coconut milk, fresh milk and whipped cream. To add texture and crunchy feel, cornflakes on the recipes are generously sprinkled on top before serving.

Food expert Rosendo Ferreria shares this no-bake recipe that's easy to do and perfect for those who do not have an oven but love to prepare desserts.

"You can also play around with the flavors of your choice," says Ferreria, who conducts private cooking, baking and cake decorating classes by appointment. Cmobile 0919-5660977).

"You can opt for mangoes: whole adding the coconut juice or the dried mango fruit using mango juice."

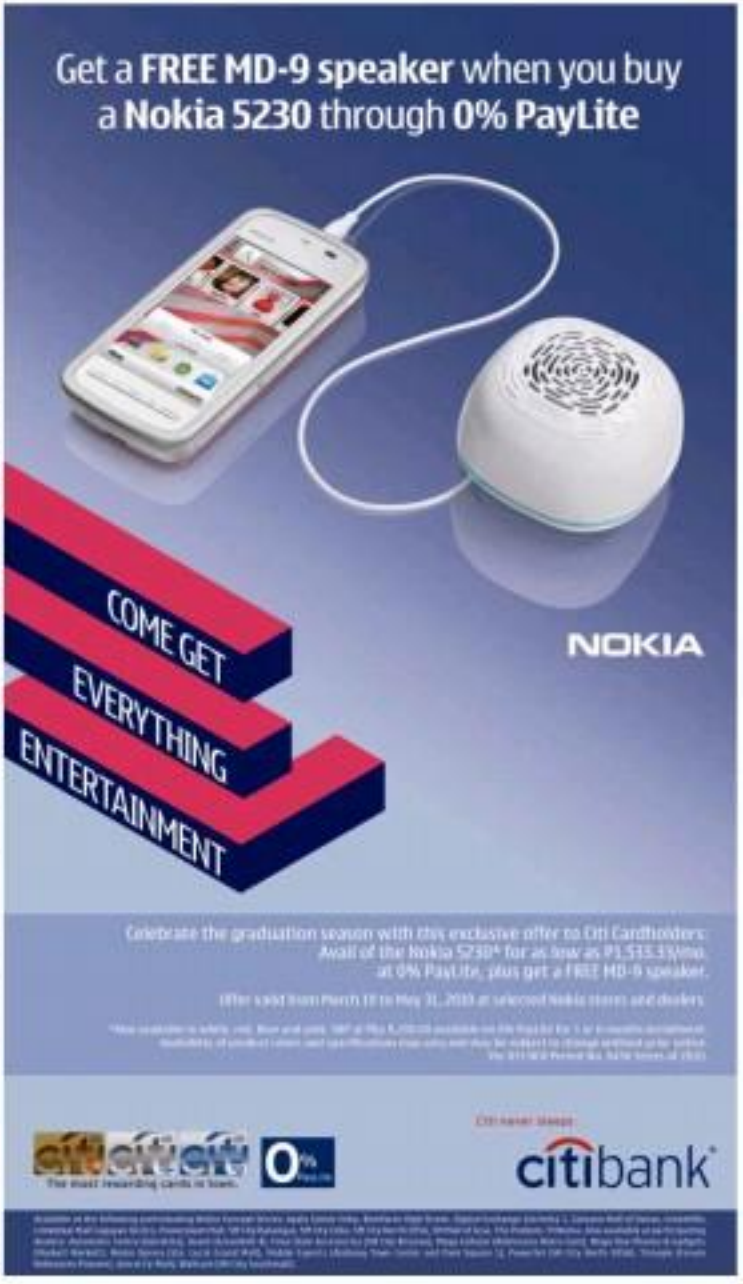
To prepare the cream topping, simply beat whipping cream and powdered sugar at medium speed over an electric mixer until light and fluffy. Transfer to a piping bag fitted with an open star tip.

Coco-Corn Gelatin
2 tbsp unflavored gelatin
½ c fresh milk
½ c canned evaporated milk or cream
1 c all-purpose cream
½ c liquid from canned whole corn kernels
½ c white sugar
Well-drained canned whole corn kernels

Topping:
1 c chilled whipping cream
¼ c sifted powdered sugar
Cornflakes or any crispies for topping

For suggestions, e-mail the author at vbaga@inquirer.com.ph.

1 IN A LARGE saucepan, allow the gelatin to bloom in fresh milk for five minutes. Add coconut milk and all-purpose cream.



A new song will resound in the m

the Lere

Coco Corn Gelatin

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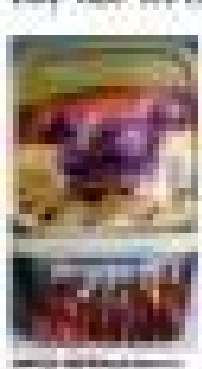
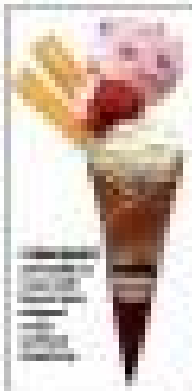
Buy 'idea' ice cream, help send kids to school





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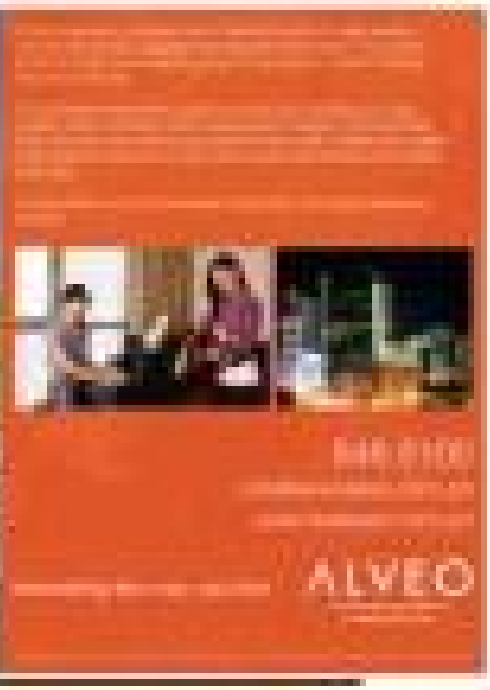
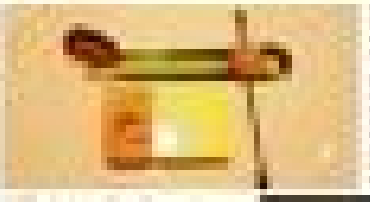
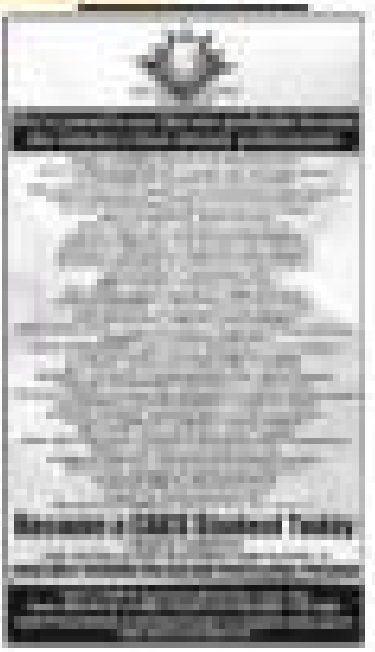


ALVEO

Pinoy chefs off to Singapore





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FOODIE PROFILE

Food adventurer

This former vegetarian lets his palate go where the cowards don't—from eating live prawns to enjoying gourmet meals cooked in the mountains

By Tom Pascor

THE WORLD IS JOS JOS SUPPER playground.

This 39-year-old real estate manager takes both work and play seriously. Jos Jos, who was in Switzerland recently to get ready for Bocuse d'or Europe, has a big passion for the outdoors and food.

When it comes to food, Jos Jos is fearless. But he refuses to touch ham, bacon and hotdogs). Hearing him talk about how he ate live prawns that were still wriggling, it's hard to believe he used to be a vegetarian.

He doesn't just enjoy eating food, he also enjoys cooking it. And he relishes cooking in the mountains even more so. "After you've set up your tent, there is a great luxury and detachment in peeling your own garlic, chopping your own onions, making your own rice noodles, and getting your pan ready while the other groups around you are whipping out their instant noodles, spam and beanie wiener."

His favorite thing to cook during a climbs? Casserole. "It's great because it soaks up the flavor of any sauce and it doesn't require much water or cooking. I save that for the summit, when the water source is far."

Describe yourself in an eat.

"The heavier the food, the closer it is to the sun and the earth, the less cooking involved, the more nourishing it is. Having said that, it is a privilege to eat at the table of people who know what they are doing in the kitchen, who treat a pot a symphony of flavors and who paint with sauces. Art like that takes hours if not days of preparation, while I will spend a maximum of an hour to prepare a meal. But I don't mind savoring something in the oven or slow burner and tearing it for a few hours."

Unforgettable music: Faith Tolentino. Sugar crushed a rasting menu to match each mood of a trip in just one unsung friends organized by Mike Chan in Manila Lan's house last April. Everyone were home a winner that night. Or at a meal for her Easter, the sushi chef held up two wriggling prawns which he proceeded to decapitate, skin, devein, and place on a glistening pile of rice and wasabi. Then he got the fish stock and started some salt from it. When this landed on the exposed flesh, it started shivering. I have never swallowed anything that was still moving before. No food has ever roared in both, or in mine.

One food I can eat every day for the rest of my life: Sushi

One food I can never eat: Shark's fin or whale

One food I wish they'd bring back: Maybe they should let cube steaks return office and sugar-free bubblegum. Nah, we'd get fat/ful.

Guilty pleasure: As a former vegetarian, eating meat is a guilty pleasure. It is manlier, but it's the way of the world. The stronger take advantage of the weaker to happen, in today's, it happens in civilization.

Favorite midnight snack: I try to avoid this when watching my weight for a race, but I genuinely enjoy cold leftovers.

Kitchen raid

Favorite...

Bread: Anything soft and fresh. Whole wheat is better.

Cheese: Roquefort

Sweet: Sevy

Hotdog/sausage: I like to know which part of the animal or which animal I am eating. So no.

Ham: Nope, see part about frankfurters.

Fruit: Buko and mango, not so-golden.

Cereal: Anything with granola.

Potato chips: I prefer French fries; thick, with the skin still on it. But I do like curly chips.

Popcorn: At the movies

Nuts: Anything except cashews

Candy: Fresh strawberries/No? Not really sweet/a person.

Chocolate: Anything dark and bitter

Cake: Pineapple upside down cake

Ice cream: Earlier in the year I tried liquid nitrogen ice cream for the first time. Took it up on "ice"Hills.

Wine: "I let Alex Tin, Luigi Bosca or Hugo de Leon pick the bottle. I'll never finish one on my own. Port if you please me, I like sherbing and two wines."

Beer: "Unique beer or whatever Anonymous Avenue or Jared Charleston is offering."

Bills: "Wala pa ko nasulo si Alan ha!"

James Bulos Mayonnaise.

Camaje Banana ketchup.

Mayo: Mix oil, vinegar, salt and eggs yourself. It's tastier and cheaper.

Butter: Can anyone taste the difference between butter?

Recipe times

Soup: Tom Yum, from my kitchen. For more Thai recipes/more good from pain. It's very easy to make if you have galangal and kaffir (That ginger and lime, which are grow in the Philippines).

Salad: Arugula. In our Veggie-by-golly-wow stopped delivering, we all lost something when Ann and Tricia broke up. Oh, and I love Claude Tayag's *pako* salad. I also enjoy ordering seaweed seaweed salad.

Pasta/noodles: I like to order things that are too labor intensive or messy for me to make myself. Like squid ink pasta. Or mixed seafood pasta. Otherwise, I'll just mix my own pasta or stew my own tomato sauce.

Fried chicken: KFC original recipe brings me back to childhood with my dad and brother. Their hardware is the new cajuns for the masses.

Pizza: Bruno's in C. Yellow Cab has a decent crust if you have them hold all the oily preserved meat.

Steak: Tastes but it better in front of a WIF pan.

Burger: Brother's Lamb burger.

Dessert: Ensaymada in ginger soup

JOSH JOS Bulos

Old 'panciteria' is worth the trip to Chinatown

I GOT A TEXT FROM MY COUSIN Dr. Jazz inviting me to an old joint, new in Sta. Cruz, Manila. All I knew was we were going with someone who gained on the Chinatown scene and is familiar with the owners of Chinatown dining.

I braved the traffic of Manila and ended up beside the Sta. Cruz church. From there, I walked to Ongpin/de Nóvel and looked for an old panciteria. As soon as I smelled it, I saw its bold letters, RAMON LEE PANCITERIA, 1939. I instantly liked what I saw.

Another friend who joined us, Wilson, told me that, at a little boy in the 1950s, he would tag along with his father to these early food places. And that's how he was conditioned to Chinese cuisine.

Ramon Lee's is your typical Manila panciteria, with slow-moving fans, dark brown chairs, drab glass, ice and delicious food. To most of the patrons, this was their comfort food.

Chinese cuisine has evolved since those early times, but I am very to-

WORD OF MOUTH

Sandy Daza

tions at how our parents had their own simple food trips. Many diners still curse how and resistance about those days when life was simpler and life was noncurious.

I really couldn't decide what to start with. We ended up ordering quite a few dishes, starting with tofu/egg soup, which was delicious. Then we dug into Fresh Pito—deep-fried wontons stuffed with ground pork, followed by Lumpiang Shanghai, Camaron Rebozado, Lengua Bebog, Lapu-lapu Sibaw, Calamares Relleno, the house specialty Crispy Fried Chicken, Pancit Canton and Shanghai Fried Rice.

There are your typical pancit items

bestsellers, and I loved them. I was also eyeing dishes such as Pato Tim, Lechon Kawali, Shrimp with Green Peas, Angsahan con Carne, Pig Tek Pekin, Fried Meatballs, Pancit Miswa and a few others for a comeback.

However, the stuffing of the Shanghai, Camaron Rebozo and Fresh were not great that day. Tired soul, maybe? Also all were our table were cups of sauce and were sauces for all the deep-fried dishes.

All in all, it was worth the trip. On the side streets of the Sta. Cruz towards are Ongpin, with its many interesting dining choices, and Pinyanito Ivana, which has Web Site, another old panciteria, and Antipolo Mendoza, an old Spanish restaurant—two other dining institutions I have been to. This area is truly a dining destination.

Ramon Lee Panciteria is at 540 Ronquillo St. in Sta. Cruz, Manila (7536562).

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LIFESTYLE Food

Hawaiian chicken bites

By Norma Chikiamco
Contributor

HERE'S A DISH THAT'S PERfect for summer: chicken bites Hawaiian-style. What makes it "Hawaiian" is the use of pineapple juice to infuse the chicken with a tangy, sweet flavor. It's easy to prepare, sparing you from spending a lot of time in a hot kitchen. After the chicken has been marinated, all you have to do is season it with salt and brush it with cooking oil then grill it. You can also bake this dish on picnics as it's easy to serve. An optional step is to make a dip by boiling the marinade then simmering it until it thickens.

Incidentally, mothers who love to cook may want to join Oven Time! Here's Search for Mom's Best Home-Cooked Recipe. They can submit recipes for either an appetizer, main course or dessert. Entries will be judged on taste, uniqueness, preparation time and presentation. Prizes include a stay in a guest room of Oasis Thani, with complimentary buffet breakfast, and revitalizing massage treatment at Devanna Spa. Deadline for submission of entries is April 30. For more details, call 8873333 or e-mail dcuaf@pdcnet.com.

Hawaiian Chicken Bites

- 4-6 servings
- 6 large chicken thighs
- ¼ c brown sugar
- ¼ c light corn syrup
- 2 c pineapple juice
- ¼ c tomato ketchup
- Salt
- Cooking oil
- Deboned chicken thighs and cut into bite-size pieces. In a bowl mix together brown sugar, corn syrup, pineapple juice and ketchup. Arrange chicken in a marinating dish and pour top w mixture over it. Cover dish and let chicken marinate in mixture for several hours or overnight in refrigerator.

When ready to cook, preheat grill to medium. Remove chicken from marinade and transfer marinade to a saucepan. Season chicken with salt and brush with cooking oil. Put chicken on the grill, skin side up, and cook over medium heat for about two min

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Exclusive Spanish wines at Punta Fuego

By Amoldo S. Tayao

A BOTTLE OF WINE usually has its own story—better to add flavor and watch to the conversation.

At Punta Fuego, Nasugbu, Batangas, it is the flavors and stories of Spain that gained an experience with five wines from De Fanicos wine country of Ribera del Duero: Arzuaga La Planta 2008, Arzuaga Pan O'Oro 2005, Arzuaga Pago Florentino 2005, Arzuaga Crianza 2002 and Arzuaga Reserva Especial 2004 of Bodegas Arzuaga Navarro, S.L.

In a recent visit by Bodegas owner Ignacio Arzuaga, The Boy winery were introduced to Punta Fuego members and guests in a small dinner, with dishes by chef Mikel Arrak complementing the wines' elegant flavors.

Arzuaga is the second generation winemaker in his family.

Pago Florentino, named after the winery's father, is a top-listed wine.

"We've been wine for Asian people," said Jean-Claude Verdonnet, data export manager for Bodegas Arzuaga. "Soft tannins, not too much acidity and very fruity—not don't feel the alcohol."

For 97 Oro, Arzuaga's chardonnay has been rated 90 points by Parker, equivalent to "outstanding" mark for its kind of wine.

"Spanish had worked before for almost three years in one of the famous wine estates in Bordeaux de la Normeau Coast to [especially, where he learned] how to make white wine," he said. "Tempranillo. "It became his dream to create chardonnay in Ribera del Duero, a crazy idea then, since the region has always been producing red wine."

Despite the discouragements, Arzuaga pursued his dream, making Pan D' Oro a unique wine in Ribera del Duero. "What makes it special is its tastes. You can smell a lot of the mango, papaya, and then there's five years, because of the oak," Tempranillo said. Pan D' Oro is matured in French oak for six months, giving it the right touch of vanilla.

Climate, barrel conditions

Ribera del Duero's climate plays a big factor in Arzuaga's production of high-quality, powerful wines. "It's the day time, it is very hot, and then in the evening, very cool," Arzuaga said. "There is a big drop in the temperature, around 20-25 degrees, which is good for the grapes."

The region's high altitude and chalky silty soil with layers of limestone sends well with the extreme temperatures to producing quality grapes.

Aside from producing its own grapes, Bodegas Arzuaga also customizes its French oak barrels. There are three classifications, and Tempranillo uses new and aged.

"The advantage of new wood is that the wine gets more vanilla," he said. "If you use older one, then you don't want the wine to have too much wood. Old wood is usually for young wine."

In Bodegas Arzuaga, it is La Planta that is considered the joven or young wine, aged only in oak barrels for just three to four months. Rich with mixed fruit and cola and mocha flavors, La Planta is meant to be consumed young.

Crianza, on the other hand, can be aged for up to seven or eight years. Crianza is a mix of 90 percent Tempranillo, five percent Cabernet Sauvignon and five percent Merlot, the three main grape varietals grown in Bodegas Arzuaga.

"Wine is just like a woman," said Tempranillo. "A young woman has no experience, no maturity—but when you grow old with someone, it's different."

"You cannot spend your life with a young woman," he added. "Unless your name is Hugh Hefner!"

But of Arzuaga's five wines, it is Reserva Especial that is the winery's "star product." "We only make it around four more within 18 years," said Arzuaga. "We make it only when the quality of the wine is very, very good." Reserva Especial has a clean and bright purple color, with rich aromas of black fruit and fine wood, and hints of eucalyptus and black licorice.

Wine tourism

While people from all over the world enjoy the elegant taste of Arzuaga's wines, the pioneering winemaker has promoted wine tourism for his products. In his 150-ha winery sits a "hacienda style" five-star wine hotel, one of the first in Spain.

"Oprah, David and Victoria Beckham stayed in the hotel," he said with delight. "At the end of their stay they ordered 120 bottles of our wines."

The hotel also houses a restaurant.

"The palpitations on the wines set like antioxidants, just like the ones in green tea," said Tempranillo, for local consumers, the wine is presented to make its consistency more buttery. Its body texture, however, one can actually soak him/herself in a tub of wine.

"One rule: if someone tries to drink the wine?" asked one of Punta Fuego's dinner guests.

"That we tell them to just buy the bottle!" Tempranillo said.

WINEMAKER Ignacio Arzuaga.

CHEF Mikel Arrak of Punta Fuego

RESERVA Especial is made only four times in 18 years.

ALBERT Xavier Burgos, Dale Flores, Rosa Arrieta, Juan Antonio Arrieta and Marissa Xavier Burgos

ALFRED Xavier Burgos with Ignacio Arzuaga

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Grandma's cooking—daring and different

By Pam Pastor

IN HIGH SCHOOL, I WAS EMBARRASSED to find out that a schoolmate had held a grudge against me for years. Apparently, when we were in second grade, I looked at her lunch and scrunched my nose up in disgust.

I'm pretty sure her lunch wasn't disgusting. I'm sure her mother didn't pack her wings or neck or menudo or something really common like that. The problem wasn't her food. The problem was that it was unfamiliar.

I blame my grandmother.

I grew up in a household where my grandmother was the queen of the kitchen. She is an excellent cook...an excellent cook. Excellent that some people call our house to ask for recipes, while others ask—no, beg—her to cook for them.

Fresh 'chicharon'

Her *lumpiang* which she makes from scratch, is legendary. And so is the *bagoong* that she makes it. On Saturday mornings, I wake up to the smell of fresh shrimp frying. I know my grandmother makes it by mixing with *bagoong*, but that doesn't stop me from swiping a few crunchy pieces and popping them into my mouth.

Her *bagoong* is so good that she has it canned and sent to relatives abroad.

Strangely, there are a lot of regular Filipino dishes my grandmother doesn't cover. I've never eaten *sinigang*, *pinakbet* or *pochero* at home. Even my grandmother's adobo is different. She serves only two kinds—white (sans soy sauce) and, my favorite...*estofado*.

I didn't realize there was anything strange about our menu at home until I was an adult and I'd eat out with friends and offer chicken adobo and receive blank stares. And I'd say, "Oh, it's like *estofado*, but without the sugar." I never really minded, though...I was too busy enjoying Grandma's cooking. My friends and classmates did, too. They always loved going to our house because the food was good.

When I asked my grandmother why our food at home was different, she said it didn't seem different to her because that's what they ate while she was growing up. Her recipes were passed on to her by her mother, who was also a lola. Same cook. She and my siblings...yes, even her brothers—all grew up to be experts in the kitchen.

Hot soup

Grandma used to prepare her weekly menu on Saturday mornings, before going to the market. She'd have set meals for the entire week planned. She liked mixing and matching her dishes...there was never just one viand on the table. It wouldn't do, especially since my grandfather needed hot (practically boiling) soup with every meal.

"If you serve soup, you must also serve something dry" my grandmother would say.

My grandmother would never simply admire or embarrass Tubao with company or liposo, assigning me tasks with varying gravity, assigning to Tubao with fried pompano. Or Isabel Tawali with pecking a bitter and mangga with ensaymada and eschebeching dating. Her pork chops are my favorite, and so is her tapadera (breaded beef steak).

Sundays were special. That's when the several buttered prawns, garlic butter mussels, canals (a traditional Spanish chickpea-based stew), mercat, and sometimes even a barbecued chicken and steak, which she refers to as "mentioning Kentucky."

Sundays were called days, too. My grandma's Caesar salad was even final day of any evening, and her Russian salad, which some think is somewhat of a hoot that she lovingly peels by hand, is always a refreshing treat.

Whenever we'd have parties at home, she'd cook longer marathons with her famous adobo, pancit, paella, callos and kare-kare. She says that when one serves kare-kare, one must also serve kalamay. She believes in balance, even at the dining table.

Spanish 'pastaje'

Then there are the dishes that she only cooks during Christmas and New Year. You can guess, whoodle and hog but all others will be feasible.

Those treats never appear on our table at any other time of the year. Her Spanish *pastaje* (made with beef shanks, pork, chorizo, ham bone, potatoes, whole garlic, onions and garbanzos), softening melted and mixed with chicken and chorizo gravy are dishes that are eagerly awaited by the entire family.

Every Good Friday is an opportunity for a good family meal. I always found it funny that my grandmother would eat a tablet of multivitamins in front of every plate just in case someone was allergic to the oysters, mussels, clams and other seafood she was about to serve.

When I turned vegetarian for 11 months, my grandmother took that as a challenge. She started whipping up meat-less versions of her kitchen, one of which was her special ox grain, which she baked for me.

Because of the sporadic rainshowers, I keep begging her to make champorado for me, which my friends have also come to love. The truth is, the rain is just an excuse. I'd eat her champorado even at the height of summer. It's incredibly rich and chocolatey. I eat it cold and without milk.

Christmas 'embotido'

I no longer live with my grandma but I'd be lying if I say I don't miss her cooking. I still enjoy it during special occasions. Christmas will not be Christmas without her embotido.

Because of grandma's culinary gift, I grew up in a family of discerning eaters. When it comes to food, some of my relatives can be pretty hard to please. But we know how to appreciate good food. That's something we learned at home.

My grandma instilled in me a love for reading. I consider that her biggest gift. Good might be her strongest suit, but her discipline in how to eat well...its finger sylvinda and finger pochero. Heck, finger my second grade classmate who's held a grudge for so long.

My grandma's cooking was not just about eating, and her kitchen crowed more than just food. Our piano held tales and restaurants, adventures for the palate, memories and love.

Light, sweet summer treats

THE MAIN KITCHEN OFFERS light and sweet creations. Chocolate hotcake mix becomes fruit-laden cups topped with cream and garnished with cherry and orange slices. Classic lemon squares take normal cookie sugar while sweet peach and banana slices take turns in the microwave.

For more recipes, other culinary ideas and summer schedule, log on to www.themainkitchen.com.

Banana-Peach Crepes Brûlée

Crepe:
½ pcs eggs, slightly beaten
1 pack Maya Original Hot cake Mix 200g
½ c milk
1 tbsp melted butter
melted butter for greasing
Filling:
8 pcs banana lakatan, sliced
8 pcs peach halves, sliced
1 c brown sugar
½ c crushed graham crackers
½ c finely chopped walnuts
vanilla custard sauce
2 cups pasteurized cream
½ tsp vanilla essence
4 pcs egg yolks
4 tbsp sugar
1 c brown sugar

Combine egg, banana mix and milk in a mixing bowl. Beat with a wire whisk until smooth then blend in butter. Heat **through** mixture **of** lumps then and grease a nonstick pan. Pour ¼ cup batter mixture and tilt to cover bottom of the pan. Cook and loosen edges then transfer crepe to a serving plate. Repeat batter procedure until the remaining crepe mixture. Set aside.

Prepare filling: Combine all **ingredients** in a bowl, slightly toss until well-blended. Set aside.

Prepare sauce: In a double boiler, combine all ingredients except brown sugar; cook until slightly thick.

To assemble: Quarter-fold crepes to form a pocket. Fill each pocket with the filling mixture. Sprinkle brown sugar evenly on top of crepe and quickly burn sugar using chef's torch so the sugar darkens to golden brown but not charred. Drizzle top with vanilla custard sauce. Serve the remaining vanilla sauce on the side.

Yield: 14-20 crepes

Chocolate-Orange Cannoli Cups

Batter mixture:
1 pack Maya Chocolate Hotcake Mix 200g
4 pcs eggs
1 c orange juice
2 tbsp oil
Filling:
1 c whipped cream, chilled
¼ c confectioners' sugar
½ tsp orange extract
orange segments and pasteurized cherries for garnish

In a bowl, mix together all ingredients for batter mixture. Heat a slightly greased Teflon skillet and pour about ¼ cup of batter mixture, tilting pan to allow mixture to spread thinly on skillet. Let cook until set. Repeat procedure with the remaining mixture.

Place one cooked crispy thin crepe while still warm at the back of inverted 6-inch cupcake/muffin mold or cup; mold or Gently press to form in the shape of cannoli cup. Set aside to cool. Repeat procedure with the remaining crepes.

Prepare cream: Whip cream until fluffy, gradually add the confectioners' sugar then incorporate orange extract. Pipe the cream mixture in the cannoli cups then garnish with orange segments and slices of preserved cherries.

Yield: 6-7 cannoli cups

Lemon Square

Crust:
1 pack Maya Quick n' Easy Complete Hotcake Mix 200g
¼ c unsalted butter
2 tbsp water
Topping:
2 pcs eggs
½ c sugar
2 tsp grated lemon peel
3 tbsp lemon juice
½ tsp baking powder
confectioners' sugar for dusting

Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease an 8 x 8 x 2-inch square pan. Set aside.

In a bowl combine hotcake mix, butter and water until coarse crumbs form. Press the mixture to the bottom of the pan. Bake for 10-15 minutes or until lightly brown.

Beat eggs until fluffy. Add sugar, lemon peel, lemon juice and baking powder. Pour over pre-baked crust. Bake for another 20 minutes or until the top layer has set. Cool. Cut into squares. Dust with confectioners' sugar. Decorate with shredded lemon peel if desired.

Yield: 16-20

Writing workshop ongoing

CREATIVE WRITING CLASSES for children and young adults age 8-18 are ongoing at Bookstar Timog, Makati. Classes are divided according to age/suitability levels of participants.

The workshop hopes to tap children who have the gift of writing as well as those who simply want to improve their writing skills. The workshop includes techniques in discovering one's writing style, strengthening one's style and applying this style in various modes of communication. Finishing the workshop kids will essay writing, fiction/non-fiction, short story writing and playscripting. Basic shelf life of school submission of works, which shall be critiqued objectively.

Conducted by one of the country's established book authors, the workshop shall be held weekdays, mornings and afternoons, and Saturday classes starting April 17. Interested participants may call 8168833, 8168838, e-mail mindsteamcrew@yahoo.com, or visit Bookstar Timog, 163 Legaspi St., Legaspi Village, Makati.

Filmmaking, theater workshops

The La Consolacion College-Manila's Center for Theater Innovation and Digital Filmmaking will host its 2010 Summer Digital Filmmaking and Theater Production Workshops April 19-May 29 at LCCM campus grounds and TV Studio at No. 8 Remedios St., Manila. Call 3136032; e-mail lccm_admin@mindtrip.net; log on to lccm.edu.ph.

Green holistic website

Activists Philippines.Com!, the first e-commerce website exclusively for the natural health and wellness industry, will be launched April 24, 1-4 p.m., at Malagutan, San Jose Villa and Retreat Function rooms of The Peninsula Manila, Makati City. Due to limited seats, preregister at holistichilippines.com to secure application forms or call 2171088 and 2911-0802/116; e-mail mindtrip.planet@yahoo.com.

Mexican street dance

Ela Mallol's and Hotel Mercedes at Cantina Old Mall at Ilaw on April 16, with Mexican dancers and mariachi.

UP LAW CLASS 1968 MAKES DONATION

The officers and trustees of the UP College of Law Class of 1968 Foundation Inc., led by their chairman, lawyer Isidro Q. U. Ureta Jr., and trustee Jose Aparicio Sibal, chair and CEO of Central Law Book Supply Publishing Inc., were among our UP grandson Emerlinda Roman and UP College of Law Dean Pacifico Lorenzo copies of "Philippine Reports, 2nd Supreme Court Reports Annotated." From left, Luis Fernandez, Virgilio Mangunta, Estelito Jaime, Jaime Lopez, Virginia Sze, Chita Angeles, Ureta, Roman, Lorenzo, Foundation treasurer Manuel Mendoza, Olivia Calvario-Santos, Sibal, Pilipina Jimenez-Liboro, Secretary Perla Bautista, lawyers Manuel Camacho and Arnaldo Feija.

Hawaiian chicken bites

Pineapple D3

sites. Turn chicken over and continue grilling until chicken is fully cooked and tender, about two more minutes. Remove from grill and transfer to a serving platter.

Bring the reserved marinade to a boil. Lower heat then simmer for around four to five minutes or until sauce thickens. Serve as a dip for the chicken.

Tips

- Before putting the chicken on the grill, brush the grill with some cooking oil so chicken doesn't stick to the grill.
- You can also use chicken breasts or a combination of chicken breasts and thighs.
- For a more Hawaiian look and taste, serve the chicken with grilled fresh pineapple.

How the Champions Do It

The Pinoy Alliance of the Philippines and their Recipe for Success

Doña Mary's 'kilawing librillo,' Bacalao and 'tinapa' soup a la Erap

HERE'S A CLOSER LOOK AT former President Joseph Ejercito Estrada as we continue our series on "Getting to know our candidates for president."

Favorite food: Kare-kare, relleno sa manok, Adobo

Salt or pepper: Pepper

Paris or tuba: Tuba. And if the tuba comes with chopped garlic, even better. I love garlic, and use it with nearly all dishes I eat or cook for both the taste and to boost healths.

Taste preferences: Sweet, spicy, salty, bitter? Spicy

If you were an ingredient, what would you be? Garlic

At the end of a long day, what food do you long to get home to? Kilagang bulo, fried fresh fish, particularly tipo-tipo

Favorite drinks: Red or juice

Favorite spirit: Red wine

Do you cook? Yes, I'm a whiz at cooking lucullus, a dish that brings to mind my mother, Doña Mary who is my opinion was the best cook.

Favorite dining destination: My own home and Tanguisson

What is the hardest you've traveled for food? And for what dish?

Davao for Aspen: Anyone to dine at Bahay-bahay, Rib-eye steak cooked medium well with corn on the cob at Peter Luger Steak House, New York. Lee Tin Wah, Hong Kong, for fresh seafood...crab with garlic, steamed fish.

Does your partner influence your eating habits?

It was still my mother who earned the most influence on me in this regard.

KITCHEN RESCUE

Aleggie Agoncillo

For state dinner–'kare-kare,' perhaps 'adobo,' to show President Obama how flavorful Filipino cuisine is'

SUNDAY LUNCH...an Ejercito tradition

When you think of food, is there one person you associate it with?

Manok-dawar, again, my mother

If you were to host a state dinner for US President Obama, what dish would you serve him and why?

Kare-kare, perhaps even adobo, to show President Obama how flavorful Filipino cuisine is.

If you are to be president elect, how will you celebrate your victory?

I will host a simple dinner for my favorite people: the residents of Paranas, Samar, and families in Tanay where I spent almost seven years in detention.

There are two things that we are certain of about Erap: his passion for good food and his undying love and devotion to his mother.

When Doña Mary celebrated her 100th birthday, her children paid her a most befitting tribute: a cookbook simply titled "Maria's Recipes."

The book, divided in two parts: "Food for the Soul," a chapter dedicated to Doña Mary's favorite devotional prayers, and

ERAP with Doña Mary

"Food for the Body," history of the Ejercito clan, chronicled through the pleasures of the table filled with snapshots, anecdotes and, of course, her treasured recipes, lovingly from soup to nuts, many scribbled by hand.

With 10 children and a dining table that seats 20, can anybody just imagine what Doña Mary's kitchen was like.

An entry in "Maria's Recipes" describes it as "her favorite place in the Evangelhuman home; an immaculate white kitchen with high ceiling, lots of windows, a breakfast nook for eight and a long wooden working table.

"While working there, Maria had a frequent visitor, her son Joseph. Among her children, it was young Joseph who found interest in cooking. Like his mom, he also loves the kitchen... Maria's passion for good food lives on, with Joseph."

Doña Mary's Kilawing Librillo

1 k each beef (lentils and Apay (washed and drained)
½ - 3/4 cup tuna (yellow bean paste)
1 k radish, sliced thinly
4 cloves garlic, crushed
2 onions, chopped
4-6 pcs tomatoes, chopped
¼ c native vinegar
dash black pepper
salt to taste

Boil Apay in water for 15 minutes. Change water and continue to cook Apay until tender. Do the same with librillo.

Blanch tuna strips of ½" x 2".

Heat cooking oil in a skillet, sauté garlic, onions and tomatoes.

Add tuna, continue to sauté.

Add tomato and a little water.

Add radish, season to taste.

Pour vinegar, simmer uncovered, do not stir.

When radish is cooked, remove from flame.

In the Ejercito household, this dish, together with Doña's Pancit Adobada, is always served with kare-kare.

Erap's Famous Bacalao

1 k bacalao (salted cod fish)
2 tbsp olive oil (best to use virgin olive oil)
3 cloves garlic, crushed
2 pcs onions, chopped
3 c tomatoes (deseed, seeded, chopped)
½ c garbanzos, skin removed
½ c tomato sauce
½ - 1 c stock
dash of black ground pepper
2 pcs red bell peppers, seeded, sliced into strips
½ c pitted or stuffed green olives

Soak bacalao in water overnight. Change water once during the soaking period.

Drain and flake fish. Set aside.

Heat olive oil in a skillet and sauté garlic, onions and tomatoes.

Add bacalao and garbanzos.

Add tomato sauce and stock.

Season with pepper.

Cover and simmer over low heat.

When liquid has reduced, add bell peppers and olives.

Cover and simmer for three minutes more.

Drizzle with additional olive oil, if desired.

Erap's Tinapa Soup

Shred regular tinapa purchased at your nearest palengke. Heat some oil. Sauté some garlic, onions and tomatoes. Add tinapa, stir then add water. Let boil and simmer for a few minutes. Garnish with dahon ng sili or even malunggay leaves.

Get a copy of my Summer Cooking Class Schedules: Classes for Kids, My Style/My Cuisines, Cooking for Teens and Beginners. For reservations and information, call 8389289, 8898888, 8270888, 8988-2373/86.

E-mail the author at eagoncillo@yahoo.com.ph

CCAC CHINESE CULINARY ARTS CENTER

sapporo
ESSENTIAL COOKING
HEALTHY RECIPE

Salmon Fillet in Sake Marinade
Over Sapporo Sotanghon

Copyright © 2009 by Sapporo Products Inc. Available in major supermarkets nationwide.

Coffee shop now offers transfat-free doughnuts

STARBUCKS OFFERS TOP POT DOUGHNUTS to its arabica blends coffee outlets in the Philippines.

Top Pot is a family-owned business started by brothers Mark and Michael Klobeck. Starbucks selected Top Pot in 2003 as one of their doughnuts in the Starbucks pastry cases of stores throughout western Washington. Starbucks offers a unique, old-style hand-forged doughnut. They are classic Old Fashioned Doughnut, Chocolate Old Fashioned Doughnut, Top Pot Apple Fritter.

All Top Pot doughnuts served at Starbucks have zero grams transfat.

LIFESTYLE Food

FOODIE PROFILE

Marc Abaya loves his Cheetos

The rock star reveals his food secrets—from his love for white chocolate to his penchant for drinking vinegar

By Pam Pastor

ROCKSTAR ABAYA IS THE GUY'S FULL OF passion.

When 28-year-old musician Marc Abaya does something, he does it with zeal—whether it's performing with his band Xposed, hosting or acting for television, or engaging in boxing or muay thai.

He has one other passion—food. Marc, who calls himself "Tsokolla" when it comes to eating, loves white chocolate, Cheetos and, yes, drinking vinegar.

Food confessions

Describe yourself as an eater: Godzilla

Unforgettable meal: Eat Bulaga's birthday lunch at Sofitel in 2008. We ate at Spiral. It was insane! So much food.

One food I can eat every day for the rest of my life: Tuna's author... but if I had no choice, I'd probably go for Japanese.

One food I will never eat: Papaitan

One food I wish they would bring back: McDonald's Twister Fries

Guilty pleasure: Drinking vinegar or pickling on anyone

Favorite midnight snack: Cheetos

Kitchen Raid

Favorite...

Bread: Rye

Cheese: Buffalo mozzarella

Booze: "The booze the better."

Hotdog/sausage: Hungarian

Ham: Prosciutto

Fruit: Plums

Cereal: Frosted Flakes

Potato chips: Bottle Chips (any flavor), Lays Texitos

Popcorn: Tom's popcorn with extra butter

Nuts: "Any local brand with lots of salt and dried garlic."

Candy: Sour Balls

Chocolate: White Toblerone, White Granola, White Kit Kat

Cake: White chocolate cheesecake from Rockford

Ice cream: "Ben & Jerry's, any flavor!"

Wine: "The sweeter the better."

Beer: Red Horse

Milk: 100Cc Unsweetened Skim Milk

Juice: TEPCO Aloe Vera and White Grape Juice

Cereal: Heinz

Mayo: "Any Japanese brand."

Butter: Anchor, salted.

Pasta Sauce

Group: Friday's Clam Chowder

Salad: Wildgrin's Grilled Chicken Caesar Salad

Pasta: noodles: "Any pasta from Express."

Fried chicken: Shakey's

Pizza: "Shakey's. Extra cream—extra cheese, garlic, and anchovies."

Steak: "Any steak from Gulliver's"

Burger: Wendy's Baconator 01

Dessert: "Any sorbet from the Manila Peninsula"

Any other favorites? CHEESECE!

Local food school now accredited by American Culinary Federation

THE CENTER FOR CULINARY ARTS (CCA, Manila) academic programs are now accredited by the American Culinary Federation Foundation (ACF).

The ACF accreditation, first given in 2008, is for CCA, Manila's flagship short courses—the one-year program in Baking and Pastry Arts, and the two-year program in Culinary Arts and Technology program.

ACF is a premier professional chefs' organization based in North America with 230 chapters and 15,000 members in the US. Sanctioned by the Council on Higher Education for Accreditation, ACF is the only recognized organization to accredit culinary arts, baking and pastry programs in the US.

This year, CCA, Manila's stride in culinary education got another recognition from the world's industry leaders through a re-accreditation of a number of its programs by ACF.

Heinz Kimball, ACF Accreditation Manager, says the schools that avail of their programs seek accreditation for culinary arts, baking and pastry programs undergo a stringent, evaluation process. While any culinary school can apply for an ACF accreditation, only a few pass their standards.

A team composed of Kimball, a culinary educator and a chef conducts the evaluation process. The accreditations are given for a three-year, five-year and seven-year duration, depending on the result of the evaluation.

For inquiries about the CCA, Manila call 926-8840-41; e-mail marketing@ccamanila.com; visit www.cca-manila.com. CCA, Manila Campus is at 2/F Bonifacio Ave., Loyola Heights, Quezon City.

GARFIELD

A. CAPP

PUGAD BAABY

DICK TRACY

LOVEBIRDS

JAMES BOND

DRONE COMEDY

BABY BLUES

TULDOK

SEH

BIRD MACHINE

SHERWIN'S LADDON

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCES DRAKE

TAU BORN TODAY People like you. You're charming. Nevertheless, you're also smart. You are a powerful decision maker. You are a powerful decision maker. You are fantastic because the will to help you every night. Perfect love affair. The key is to remain positive and optimistic. You're adjustable, confident and sensitive to others. Work hard to overcome or avoid controlling the urge. Your rewards will come in time.

Birthdate of Gabrielle de Pilles, conservationist; Abraham Gonzalez, singer; Ashley Williams, actress

ARIES (March 21 to April 20): Today your home is no time to rest and relax. Treat your accommodating ways. You might dream up a new, successful business, a new job or new ways to make money on the side. Yes!

TAURUS (April 21 to May 20): You might feel more sure. Avoid that usual hobby because the Moon is in your sign. Romance time can make you a little lucky. And not coincidentally, it's a good time to make money.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Work plays a central theme today. This is also a promising day to research or any time. In fact, extend those work days.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): A conversation with a female acquaintance could be meaningful. Perhaps someone needs to confide in you, or vice versa. Be sympathetic and keep an open mind.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Some aspect of your private life could slightly affect the flow of business, possibly involving a partner.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You can be a very powerful ally to your friends. Because the Moon is in your sign, you're in the mood for romance. Try to learn something new. Be considerate and you'll have fun.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Keep a close eye on your assets about spending, cash flow, taxes, debt and anything having to do with shared property. And no, nothing. Make sure you have the correct information. Otherwise you will avoid unnecessary surprises.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Don't be so quick. Hold off on any decisions when dealing with others today because the Moon is opposite your sign. This is mixed mail: lucky, but no poison, friends and diplomacy.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Set aside a little extra time today to get better organized. Take care of issues before they become problems or worse, deal with you.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): There's a fun family flair. Have a long lunch. Make the going after work. Invite people over to the evening for pizza and beer. Have a ball!

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Today you're surprised to find your private and personal matters. Talk to family members. Invite family over. Conversations with customers can be significant.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Short trips, errands, chores, sales and conversations with others, especially relatives and neighbors, will keep you on the go today! Just accept the busy pace, and multitasking and activity.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3×3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. For more programs visit www.sudoku.com

Answers to previous puzzle

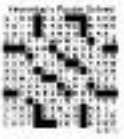
1	3	9	4	6	7	8	5	2
4	6	7	8	5	2	9	1	3
8	5	2	9	1	3	4	6	7
5	9	1	3	4	8	6	7	2
6	4	3	2	7	5	1	9	8
2	7	8	6	9	1	3	4	5
9	1	4	7	3	6	5	2	8
7	8	6	5	2	9	1	3	4
3	2	5	1	8	4	7	8	6

Conceptis SudoKu

	2		8	1		3		
								7
6			2		4			
	2					8		6
3				5				4
7		9				1		
			7		2			3
4								
		8		3	5		9	

Medium ★★★

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



Cookie store now a café offering pasta, rice meals

By Jobie Ramirez
Contributor

HAPPY 1st birthday cookie cake

WHEN THE FORmer franchisee owner of Mrs. Fields bought Debbi Fields to Manila a few years back, the blonde founder and spokesperson of Mrs. Fields Bakery said the always current brand of Tahnoo brand pepper sauce in her purse since she loved dashing it over her meal.

But forward to 2013. Mrs. Fields Cookie Café just opened its 20th store in the cinema level of the swanky Eastwood Mall, and if it sure Debbi Fields decides to visit Manila again, her love is of Tahnoo wasn't come to handy to more ways than one.

That's because Mrs. Fields is now serving not just cookies but full pizzas ranging from pastas to sandwiches and rice meals. Ever since the new Mrs. Fields franchise was awarded to the same group behind Tasty College, the young husband-and-wife team of Gerwin and Sheryll Espinosa-Seo has been aggressively expanding and improving the menu with the help of a team of NDD kitchen experts.

Dubbed like the one in Manila

MRS. FIELDS' SMOOSHIE PRODUCTS

Pavilion Hotel and at the SM's Trenta 1 are serving a full menu, while the kiosk-style branch in Power Plant mall serves plain cookies.

The newly opened Eastwood Mall branch is what the owners have dubbed as a limited cafe, offering cookies as well as select full plates.

Pinay palate

The Asian fusel sandwich has a hint of Spanish Salpicao flavor and is very tasty according to the tag team of Jessica Uy brand manager and marketing head, and Nicole Santos, corporate communications specialist, the offerings are designed to satisfy the Filipino palate.

The Philippine franchise operator has been given leeway to experiment with menu offerings, given that the local coffee cooler scene is quite competitive, with international brands such as Starbucks and Seattle's Best selling everything from frappés and cappuccinos to breakfast.

BIG COOKIE cake for graduates

But coffee lovers, Mrs. Fields now offers coffee confections with a small cookie nibble thrown in for fun, similar to what high-end hotels serve in their lobbies and coffee shops—but without the expensive price tags. Now if only Mrs. Debbi Fields would visit again and try the full plates with her Tahnoo sauce in tow.

Cakes and tarts filled with chocolate and strawberries

THE MAYA KITCHEN PRESENTS recipes of cakes and tarts.

The Chocolate Strawberry Mousse Temptation Cake is a blend of moist cake topped with chocolate mousse and pink mousse with a dusting of cocoa powder on top. Strawberry Panna Cotta Mini Tarts are like mini pastry shells filled with yogurt and cream and topped with fresh strawberry. Joel's Chocolate Heart Cake is frosted with chocolate icing and topped with chocolate shavings.

For more recipes and other culinary tips, log on to www.themayakitchen.com or e-mail contactus@themayakitchen.com.

Chocolate Strawberry Mousse Temptation Cake

Cake:
1 pack Maya Decadence Velvet Cake Mix, 320 g
3 eggs
1 c + 1 tbsp water
⅓ c oil
Nonstick cookspray (AC207)
Chocolate mousse:
200 g Milkmaid or semi-sweet chocolate chips
2 tbsp unflavored gelatin
¼ c cold water
¼ c hot water
1 pack all-purpose cream, 1250 mL, chilled
Pink mousse:
2 tbsp unflavored gelatin
¼ c cold water
¼ c hot water
200 g strawberry chocolate chips
2 pack all-purpose cream, 1250 mL, chilled
Cream and liner for bottom of pan: Pack instant pan. Set aside. Prepare cake mix as per package directions and pour in a greased pan and bake for 28-35 minutes or until done. Cool. Wrap and store in refrigerated cake. Tape ends of acetate to pan to place. Set aside.

Prepare chocolate mousse: Melt chocolate over double boiler.

In another bowl, combine gelatin and cold water; stir until gelatin is completely dissolved and mixture is clear. Add half to half portion of melted chocolate. Mix remaining in the second half part of chocolate mixture. Cool slightly. In a mixer bowl, whip cream until doubled in volume. Divide cream into portions. Add half of whipped cream mixture into first half portion of chocolate mixture. Layer on top of cake. Chill.

Prepare pink mousse: Follow the same procedure as chocolate mousse. Top first half of the pink mousse mixture over chocolate mousse layer. Arrange to set. Add remaining portion of whipped cream to set, and half part of chocolate mousse layer mixture over pink mousse. Repeat the same procedure with the remaining pink mousse and whipped cream then layer on top of chocolate mousse. Decorate top of cake with heart stenciled on. Freeze overnight.

Cake should have five layers:
1st layer—Cake
2nd layer—Chocolate mousse (first half)
3rd layer—Pink mousse (first half)
4th layer—Chocolate mousse (remaining half)
5th layer—Pink mousse (remaining half)
Yield: 8, 10 slices

Strawberry Panna Cotta Tarts

Cake:
1 pack Maya Decadence Chocolate Fudge Brownie Mix, 500 g
Filling:
1 ½ c heavy cream
1 ½ c flavored yogurt
½ c sugar
1 tbsp gelatin
Fresh strawberries, sliced
Bake chocolate fudge mix according to package direction. Cool, then crumble the brownie cake. Press crumbs halfway on tubes of 10 3-in tart molders lined with paper cups. Chill.

Prepare filling: In a heavy saucepan, combine cream, yogurt, sugar and powdered gelatin. Cook in very low fire until sugar and gelatin dissolve completely for about 5-10 minutes. Cool slightly, stir mold chilled tart crust and remove paper liner. Turn over and pour filling. Chill until set. Top with sliced fresh strawberries.
Yield: 10 tarts

Devil's Chocolate Heart Cake

Cake:
1 pack Maya Decadence Devil's Food Cake Mix, 510 g
1 c water
2 pieces eggs
½ c oil
½ c coarsely chopped walnuts
Chocolate icing:
½ c cocoa powder
1 tsp coffee
2 c evaporated milk
1 c condensed milk
½ c all-purpose flour
2 tsp baking soda
1 tbsp butter
For decoration:
Bottled cherries with stems (two 280-g bottles)
Prepare oven at 350°F. Grease and line the bottom of two 9-inch heart pans. Set aside.

Prepare cake as per package directions, then incorporate chopped walnuts. Pour into prepared pans and bake for 20-25 minutes or until done. Let it cool.

Prepare chocolate icing: In a heavy bottom saucepan, mix together the first five ingredients. Cook until thick or spreading consistency, add in baking soda and butter. Slightly whisk mixture until smooth.

To assemble: Put one layer of cake onto serving plate, spread ¼ portion of icing. Top with the second layer of cake. Frost top and sides of cake with the remaining chocolate icing. Decorate top of cake cornices with cherries with stem arranged in heart design.
Yield: 10-12 servings

Ode to butter

By Pam Pastor

"HOW WOULD YOU LOOK that?" I asked the guy who was trying to lure me with fat lab mice.

"We'll grill it. And we'll serve it with lemon butter sauce. Or garlic butter. Or chili."

"Okay, I'll take the lemon butter."

And just like that, I made the commitment to eat an 800-gram lobster.

Paler lemon butter

Long minutes later, the lobsters were plopped in the bowl of our head, freezed and perfectly grilled. But the sauce was far from perfect. I am so glad I asked them to serve it on the side.

That man's lemon butter is tasted like medicine and I knew why. There wasn't an ounce of fresh lemon juice in that small bowl; they used shiny lemon concentrate, strong and acidic, the kind you use to make really bad juice. And what's worse, there had thickened the sauce with cornstarch, giving their fake lemon butter the unmistakable gooey texture of fish ball sauce. I wouldn't even taste any trace of butter.

Blaming it for the big lobster oil ripping in front of me still wasting its fat deformed. I knew what I had to do.

We called the waitress and asked for butter and unlemoned. She had a quizzical look on her face—if she were a cartoon character she'd have a big fat question mark hovering over her head—but she wrote down our order.

After minutes of watching one calamansi and a pensive slice of butter on a saucer. The butter was still solid, it came fresh from the refrigerator.

Undeterred, I grabbed my fork and started melting the butter. When it had turned into a soft puree, I added drops of calamansi and continued whisking the butter to unbreak-it. It took a while, but it was worth it. It had created my own fake lemon butter sauce, beautiful and yellow, rich and creamy, with just the right touch of tang.

> Butter does make everything better. I don't need to worship Julia Child to know that

Salvaging bad meals

Soon, my lobster was swimming in my fake but good lemon butter sauce. It was so good that my chatty partner ended my saying it can her grilled pork belly and grilled squid. Lemon butter and tongue don't normally go together but I made no move to decipher.

That wasn't the first time I used butter to salvage what would otherwise have been a bad meal.

Unlike a lot of people, I don't always love bread. In fact, every time a flight attendant sits down a tray of food in front of me, I feel a surge of adrenaline. In my head, my inner food monitor is screaming, "Oh! rapeseed oil! Bread mixes! Soy flakes! Bring it on! I can take it!" And my stomach only has one answer—butter.

Since I'm not a big fan of un-

BUTTER is almost like water

salted butter, which is a bit of an insult to me, I open the tub packet, add a pinch in the butter, mixing it until the salt granules disappear and the butter is smooth again.

While mixing the salt they usually serve with the unpleasant meal, I make sure I use as little butter as possible. I save the butter for the last mouthful—a portion—making sure the rest of my meal is edible.

If the beef, pork, chicken or fish is bland, I smother it with butter. If the meat isn't compatible with butter, I add a dollop on the side and taste it into big bowl rice. I do the same thing with pasta.

Sneaky cook

It's a quiet operation. I'm careful to dodge the eyes searching. I do even when strangers are seated beside me. Yes, I am a sneaky cook 20,000 feet above the ground.

It's true—butter does make everything better. And if you don't subscribe to this belief, you haven't tasted what I can do with a bag of microwave popcorn and melted butter.

I've had a lifelong love affair with butter. My earliest kitchen memories involve my grandmother scraping cold sticks of butter from the refrigerator. Some part of the ex-

perience was melting butter before boiling the pancake batter into the pan. I loved watching the butter slide on the yellow until it bubbled. The smell was always glorious.

My pancakes weren't always perfectly shaped. I was never good at flipping them—but they were always delicious. Servers.

My passion for butter grew over time when I married hubby. I love greasing the baking pan with butter. I love making butter cream frosting. If it's a choice between oil and butter, I will always pick butter. My cupcakes and brownies wouldn't be the same without butter.

Until now, my most cherished part of making cheesecake is eating melted butter with crushed graham crackers and sugar to make the crust. It is one of my favorite weekday snacks.

From when I'm not cooking or baking, butter continues to make its presence felt in my life in many ways and forms.

Butter is something we can so easily take for granted. It's almost like water—we always have it in the fridge. But the next time you open that door in search of a snack, skip your usual cool Soda. Let your eyes wander over to the butter tray and think about the magic you can make with just one stick of butter.

E-mail the author at ppastor@inquirer.com.ph.

Chilean sea bass in butter lemon sauce

CHILEAN Sea Bass

DINING OUT

STORIES OTHERS POST ABOUT US FIGURES shows like Broadway and Dolphin Sea Bass in Butter Lemon Sauce. Crostini is located at the SF Eastwood Mall Open Park. Call 479-1788

Mini burrito

Fe Manila presents 20 for P20, where one can avail mini burrito, nachos with salsa and gravy all tuesday for only P20 each with 12 a.m. 8 p.m. From April 16 to May 30, drink all you can Margarita starts at 6 p.m. onwards. The menu has Super Sampler with Spareribs, Quesadilla, Mexican Pizza, Spicy Buffalo Wings, Cheese and Jalapeño Poppers, Taquitos and Nachos. Located Platter Fe Manila has branches in SM Megamall, Festival Supermall, Alabang, and Bacoodor, Ayala. The promotions also offered in Cantina Restaurants at Katipunan, De La Roza, Makati Cinema, and SM Mall of Asia.

Big mouth burger

Chili's celebrates the 3rd Annual Big Mouth Burger Day on April 27 by slashing their Big Mouth Burgers by more than half its regular selling price—from P350 to P149. For one day only, Chili's is offering its Big Mouth Burgers by as much as 60 percent off. Exclusive to dine-in customers and limited to one burger per guest, Chili's Original Burger Bar menu covers all of Chili's gourmet burgers, except Burger Bites. Chili's burgers are Baltimore Burger, Bacon Burger, BBQ Ranch Mushroom Swiss, Bruised Peppercorn, Chili's 3rd Annual Big Mouth Burger Day is on at Greenbelt 5 in Makati (7238822), Alabang Town Center, Festival Supermall, Greenhills (7272956), and Tomas Morato in Quezon City (3736071).

Cheese 'futas'

The Bellevue Hotel presents Mexican night hanged at the poolside. Mexican delights include Cheese Futas with Salsa, Nachos with Chili Shrimps, Beef Tacos and Seafood Ceviche with Cilantro. Call 7118181.

Seafood buffet

Gourmand's lunch and dinner buffet is offered at Mahogany Steak Grotto. It's Cielo de las Palmas. Call 7129968. Lunch and dinner buffet are also available at Cinderella That Shrimp House located at Shangri-la Plaza Mall, EDSA. The Lodge Call 8150886, and Dusitthani 10 normal Mall, Ayala Triangle, Ramon City (call 8923867).

'Mabuhay' cake

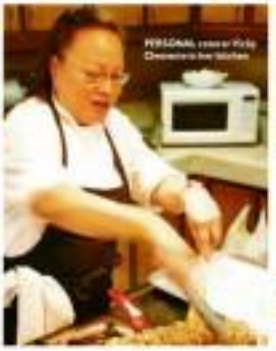
Makati Shangri-La's Kentucky Garden presents cakes every month and on special occasions. Excellent has creamy chocolate meringue, dark chocolate mousse with caramel, and cappuccino crepes. Mabuhay cake has creamy coconut meringue, mango macadamia, and mango coriander relish with baked bream. St. Valentine's is made of lime ginger biscuit, lychee cream and white chocolate leaves mousse. Desserts made of flourless chocolate biscuit, milk chocolate mousse with lime cream and cranberries punch. Easter rabbit has ginger bran biscuit, exotic coconut lime mango, and passion fruit and white chocolate mousse with passion fruit flavor, is April's Cake of the Month. May's Trolley is made of chocolate macadamia biscuit, macadamia nougatine, caramel cream, and praline macadamia brownie on chocolate plate. Bread has chocolate jelly and cardamom mousse on lychee white macadamia biscuit. All cakes can be ordered in advance one day in advance. Call 8150886 loc. 7488/7489.

Orange chicken

Dressing offers the sweet and spicy Orange Chicken in three bowls. Rice Chow Mein with a generous portion of Orange Chicken and mixed vegetables which includes crispy noodles. Chicharap and Bucle of P88, and Sate Sate set for sharing at P125.

Banana brazer

Bumbo's offers fresh beef pares and chicken adobo, barbecues and big and lemongrass. Do not miss Bumbo's almond bites and cookies such as Elephant Ears, Chocolate Bites, Macadamia Fours, Rocky Road, Cookies and Cream, Madeleine, Blue Banana. Pool Cantin at SM Mall of Asia, Robinsons Manila Mezzanine and The Block SM City North Edsa. For more updates and inquiries, please call 8363101, 8871805.



Halibut with mushroom risotto, prawn gazpacho, salmon with watercress salad—King's specialties

COUNTRY COOKING

Micky Ferre

SEAMING NOT MANILA MAKES me yearn to go back to sunny Baguio where I spent three days last month rejuvenating myself with what else this summer retreat has to offer. Thankfully there's more than just the market, incarnated after being burned last year. Or Burnham Park, where you can never go down on a limelo to enjoy the view and air because boisterous workers intrude, offering you a massage, or to sell you fortune or tell something.

There were three new places to go to, which was more than I hoped for.

Consider a private catering by Melly Tiulo Clemente (0920-6436577) who strolled to be a chef at the French Culinary Institute in New York. The place is at the family's beautiful residence on Ambaklao road, a big one with high ceiling and glass walls on three sides to give you more than a 180-degree view of the environment around, including the pine trees that her late father had planted. She had small cuttings or degustation of about eight courses, including the cocktail introduction of cheese and pate. She explained each of the courses, the better to appreciate what was before us. Cooking is Vicky's second career after working in an Ontario law office for years. She worked for Jamie Kennedy, a renowned Canadian chef, after her studies. It was a pleasant evening of friends and a newfound chef whose enthusiasm for her craft showed through her cooking.

Another new place in Baguio is located in an old setting. The Hill Station is at Casa Vallejo, probably the oldest hotel in Baguio (circa 1909). But with finishing renovations at the time of our visit, although some rooms were available for occupancy. Rhon Benitez Viajante runs Hill Station (Upper Session Road). It was inaugurated two days before I arrived and Rhon said it's still a work in progress as the hotel as the main dining area which, at the time, still had no big windows, staircase still in plastic and still no furnitures. But it was a great opening, she reported, making do with makeshift decor. Work was finished in time for the Holy Week crowd rush and she said she's happy that it's always full.

Escape from summer heat

Where we were there, with the cold breezes was finished, a hot destinating the place. Milne said the menu contains what she likes, including food she serves at her home. They're big on crispy made he draining. The name Hill Station comes from high elevation projects throughout colonial Asia developed as an escape from the summer heat.

Since I wasn't able to visit Brenda's gallery and museum on a previous visit, it was great to be able to do that on the artist himself as guide. There are several signs, he said, to direct you to the place in Asin, and sure enough there were at almost every corner. Paintings, sculptures, antique clothes and art in everyday items are arranged on several floors. I didn't get a sense of how high up we were until we were out on the balcony where Brenda pointed to a mountainside pond way down below and a garden that had a strawberry patch and tomatoes grown from seeds that arrive Ollie Culverson. Hope brought from France. The café has closed down, he told us, but one should go there for the afternoon tea. The food, Brenda has an exhibit of his recent works.

My last visit also had good timing because I was able to finally see the strawberry fields at La Trinidad Valley. Hopefully still around this but April through the farmers there told me the season lasts till May and mentioning chef Billy King at The Manor (Camp John Hay), or last.

Chef King appeared at Le Chef, The Manor dining area, and said he was cooking something out on the menu. I suppose that's what chefs do when there culinary mecade. Hope everyone likes seafood, he said, to a room thousands of menus above sea level, that was an amusing question. And so we had a series of dishes—halibut with mushroom risotto, prawn gazpacho, salmon with watercress salad. It was good to see Billy King at his workplace and he seemed so much at home at The Manor as we were in the tea where more we stayed.

Baguio is also Korean country and there are many places to have Korean cooking. But it was fortunate also to have reconnected with Dea and Renee's Bantinan who used to run the Fragrant Baguio restaurant, decades ago and now operate Bamboo Remedies. They now run Iggy's Inn and Bistro (25 South Drive, Forbes Park) where Baguio salads (with Iggy's dressing) can be had with Korean specialties like dakbokkum. Authentic tasting and legals.

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Culinary school offers 'sustainable food' training

HEALTHY minister at Institute of Culinary Arts and Food Service

THE GROWING NEED FOR sustainable food is now being addressed in the culinary world, where food preparation is no longer considered to provide excellent food and service.

A new culinary school breaks ground for its advocacy of health, wellness and sustainable food through its training programs and kitchen laboratory. "Sector chef" wannabes.

Set to open its doors in June this year, the Institute of Culinary Arts and Food Service (ICFS) creates a niche in food culinary arts and hospitality education in the country.

Responding to the need of a thriving food and beverage industry here and abroad, ICFS will train students to have higher consciousness on sustainable food so they prepare healthy dishes.

Pamalikha Hotels Group has signed a joint venture agreement with Far Eastern University to establish socially and ecologically responsible chefs and food service practitioners of TESDA Makati campus, which was built from the former Textile Building that was building on Buendia Avenue corner Malugay Street.

Called ICFAEFEU, the culinary school will offer a two year Diploma in Culinary Chefs Training Program (CCTP), a one-year Diploma in Baking and Pastry Chefs Training Program (BPCTP) and short courses in its Continuing Education Training Program (CETP).

ICFAEFEU, operated by FEU Culinary Arts and Food Services Inc., accepts applicants for enrollment in June. Call 8922899 or 8072068, or e-mail marketing_sales@fef.com.ph for inquiries. Also visit www.icf.com.ph.

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4 DATE NIGHT
5 BABE, I LOVE YOU
6 CLASH OF THE TITANS (Digital 3D)
7 HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON
8 BIOGENIC
9 DIARY OF A WIMPY KID
10 BOOK OF ELI

MANILA

1 DATE NIGHT
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6 CLASH OF THE TITANS
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METRO EAST

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4 BABE, I LOVE YOU
5 DATE NIGHT
6 HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON
7 HOT TUB MACHINE
8 POSSESSION

NOVALICHES

1 DATE NIGHT
2 CLASH OF THE TITANS
3 BABE, I LOVE YOU
4 BIOGENIC

FORUM ROBINSONS

1 SHUTTER ISLAND
2 DATE NIGHT
3 CLASH OF THE TITANS
4 BABE, I LOVE YOU

STA. ROSA

1 CLASH OF THE TITANS
2 DATE NIGHT
3 BABE, I LOVE YOU
4 THE POLAR EXPRESS

LIPA

1 CLASH OF THE TITANS
2 BABE, I LOVE YOU
3 BOOK OF ELI
4 GREEN ZONE

DASMARIÑAS

1 CLASH OF THE TITANS
2 DATE NIGHT
3 BABE, I LOVE YOU
4 GREEN ZONE

STARMILLS

1 CLASH OF THE TITANS
2 DATE NIGHT
3 BABE, I LOVE YOU
4 GREEN ZONE
5 DIARY OF A WIMPY KID
6 POSSESSION

IMUS

1 CLASH OF THE TITANS
2 DATE NIGHT
3 BABE, I LOVE YOU
4 SOUNDTRACK

ANGELES

1 CLASH OF THE TITANS
2 BABE, I LOVE YOU
3 DATE NIGHT
4 SOUNDTRACK

TACLOBAN

1 CLASH OF THE TITANS
2 BABE I LOVE YOU
3 GREEN ZONE

DUMAGUETE

1 CLASH OF THE TITANS
2 BOOK OF ELI
3 BABE I LOVE YOU

BACOLOD

1 CLASH OF THE TITANS
2 BABE I LOVE YOU
3 DATE NIGHT
4 EDGE OF DARKNESS
5 BOOK OF ELI
6 POSSESSION

ILOILO

1 THE ROAD
2 CLASH OF THE TITANS
3 BABE I LOVE YOU
4 DATE NIGHT
5 I LOVE YOU/HALF BROTHER
6 POSSESSION

GENSAN

1 CLASH OF THE TITANS
2 BABE, I LOVE YOU
3 BOOK OF ELI
4 GREEN ZONE

ILOILO NORTE

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2 CLASH OF THE TITANS
3 BABE, I LOVE YOU

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MOVIEWORLD

'Miss Saigon,' 19 years ago

MANILA—ON SUNDAY I LOGGED ON TO the Internet, as I normally do. Heading into Facebook, more than a few profiles reminded me of just how significant April 15 was.

This it dawned on me—it had been 19 years since "Miss Saigon" opened on Broadway. That's right, on April 11, 1991, amid much controversy and huge advance ticket sales, the epic musical from the team of Alain Boublil and Claude-Michel Schönberg made it to New York.

Pryce burned

Producer Cameron Mackintosh had announced that he would bring his newest production across the pond from the West End with Jonathan Pryce as The Engineer (the role had won Jonathan a Laurence Olivier Award), he had previously promised on

BACK STORY

Lea Salonga

Broadway to "Cameleon" which won him a Tony Award, and "Accidental Death of an Anarchist"). The announcement caused quite a stink in New York City, with Actors Equity having Pryce front-running in the slots.

This caused Cameron to cancel the production, announcing it in grand fashion in the New York Times. Actors Equity later reconsidered its position, and Jonathan came to New York.

Then the case of my own casting came to the fore. After the fame over Jonathan calmed down, Cameron started the fight to have me brought over to New York in time to join Jon before the case went into arbitration (I don't know all that went on in the court room, but I do have all the legal documents and exhibits somewhere in my mother's house). Cameron called me and my mentor, his London office (I was still performing him in the West End).

Not optimistic

I had a feeling this was going to be a serious conversation. He gave me a brief summary of what was going on in New York, said the case is living me to Broadway was going into arbitration, and that he wasn't too optimistic that Equity would allow this casting decision to go forward. He told me and my mother to not keep our hopes up. I said it was okay; I was incredibly grateful for everything he and "Miss Saigon" had done for me by now, however nothing was official.

I started to meditate what conclusions my mind could had ended. My contract was to complete in early December, and I had a ton of concerts scheduled in Manila, but nothing past that. My voice teacher gave me a list of good drama schools in the United Kingdom, so I started gathering my applicants' materials and having sessions with a coach for monologues. Three years would do nicely.

Going to Broadway

In late January 1991, I was in my room ready for sleep, but felt a little restless. My brother was asleep, as he always is. Suddenly, a knock on the bedroom door ... it was my dad. "We just got the phone call," he said, "you are going to Broadway."

SHHH!!!

My parents flew with me to New York to help me settle in. They accompanied me to the first day of rehearsals (Jan. 28, 1991) at 890 Broadway. There I saw Cameron again, as well as Alain and Claude-Michel, Nick Hytner, and Jonathan. I was so happy to see him. That day, I also got to meet my alternate, Joan Chang, and many other members of the company.

At the start and great, each of us had to stand up and introduce ourselves. For the most part, everyone got up, stated their name and city of origin. Jonathan got up and said, "I'm Jonathan Pryce and I'm nervous." The entire room erupted in spontaneous applause.

Picket lines

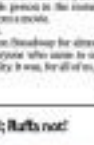
Rehearsal and technical period lasted for around two months; first preview was on March 25, 1991, opening night on April 11. There were picket lines outside the theater as protesters who had gained seats to the infamy-increasing dating-pool opening night. There were family and friends, flowers in our dressing rooms, but also a lot of tension.

After the performance, a bunch of us headed to the legendary Broadway restaurant Sardi's to celebrate. Later that night the New York Times review by Frank Rich was passed around to every single person in the restaurant, like in a scene from a movie.

The show was a hit.

"Miss Saigon" ran on Broadway for almost 10 years. I thank everyone who came to see the run in New York City. It was, for all of us, a demonstrative one.

Sarah sad; Ruffa not!



BIOGENIC

SARAH GERONIMO and Richelle Ann Go and Mark Bautista's transfer from the Equinoxe show "MAP IV" to "Party Pilipinas" on GMA 7:

"I really felt bad about the exit more than they felt because ... they did not get the attention they deserved because I was there. They deserve to get among gamechangers. Every artist is given the chance to shine on MAP."

Sherwin E. Cruz

* * *

ASKED if she felt ABS-CBN is trying to remove ... on AP John Lloyd Cruz and his alleged persona love Shaina Magdayao, TVJ's Ruffa Gutierrez bulked: "I'm sorry! I'm no spokesperson. I'm not a cowgirl, though she had AP eight years here [Australia]." "Cowgirls are old and wrinkly. I'm fresh and still have so much love to give!"

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Happy to see 2 pals move forward in show

"AMERICAN IDOL" JUDGE KRIS ROSEMONT, on hearing pals Kristhen Magsaysay and Cyrell Bravo rock in the competition:

"Kristhen's a unique, stunning person, a total sweetheart. I love her very much. You'd never think that you're going to witness such a show-friendship with her. She rushed up to hug me to reassure me first week. I actually told her the very first day of Hollywood Week, and I was like: 'Where did you get?' She was more anybody else but herself; she doesn't care, and neither does Cyrrael, and that's what I love about both of them.

"I think Kristhen and I are going to be friends for a long time. They're both going to go really far. It's maybe a cheesy [thing to say], but I mean my friends. It's like hearing someone croon. But I'll see them again soon. Cyrrael stayed with me [the night I was eliminated]. There was none of her, right now, I'm just really happy that they're [both] going forward."

Why KC said yes at last to 'Buzz'

By Nanette R. Cruz

KC CONCEPCION, THE LATEST and youngest "Star Bean" scheduled to debut on the offer to replace Sadie Gaviola on the series.

"It had something to do with the old husband," she told Inquirer Entertainment over the phone. "After I [became] more independent, [I] started considering it."

KC shares hosting chores with Kris Aquino and Boy Abunda's Sarita is now with TV5's "Pinoy Idol," an effort with them.

On April 11, "The Buzz" introduced some changes in its look and format, including "The KC Kitchenette," which spotlights new stores and Kapamilya shows.

"The new format [weaves in positive news," KC explained. "I'd rather not handle [if] not yet. I'm still learning the ropes."

She hinted that it was the changes that prompted her mom, Gliselle Gozales, to allow her to join the show.

BECAUSE mom Gliselle finally approved, KC looks happy receiving roses from co-host Boy Abunda (at Sarita).

JOE added, "I first dabbled in hosting when I was 16, as an MTV[5]. I was also just the announcer the time and doing TV commercials."

She admitted having been nervous for her first day on "The Buzz." BC explained, "All the shows I've done in the past had been taped; this a live show, you have to be on appy."

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GREENBELT

NOW SHOWING
R-13

Not just kid stuff

By Krystel Ann Dingcong

LOVE Aurora

KAPUSO STARS EUgene Domingo and Love Aurora couldn't stress enough the importance of children's shows on television.

Love, who was fills the new GMA 7 educational program "Storeville," cited a Unesco report which revealed that only 42 percent of the Filipino population could afford preprimary education.

"Sunnyville" hopes to address this need, Love said. "We are working with the Department of Education because the shows will be for school subjects like Math and Reading."

Media should pitch in to improve the quality of education in the country, Love said. "I grew up in Love. It show that children in the province need good preprimary education."

She recalled watching "Barbie" alongside Sunnyville likes to visit. "We didn't have our own TV set, I went to the neighbor's."

Uge's draw

Eugene, who from the kiddie game show "Wednesdaskul," recounted that she grew up on "Sesame Street," "Electric Company" "Bulu Buddy," "Tuluchon Mansion" and "Shelley."

"It's important to listen to children's opinions," Uge pointed out. "They are fearless that of things."

Uge was once a dabbler for award-winning versions of sermon shows. She's not fazed by the prospect of working with children.

EUGENE Domingo

"They are it's hard to work with: kids or dogs. Yes, it can be physically challenging," Uge said. "But it can be fun," she added.

Laughing, they she's like one big kid on the show, a Peter Pan-ny. First call.

Shortly entered Love and she's learning a lot about future parenting from interacting with the show's child stars, Jonjon Briones and Patricia Javier.

Added Uge: "It's like free-kid all over again."

Said Love, "It's a breath of fresh air as adults, we don't talk all sorts of problems but kids see the world differently. I am interested in how they think. They're very pure."